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THE WIDOW'D WIFE.

A COMEDY:

AS IT IS ACTED AT THE

THEATRE ROYAL

IN

DRURY LANE,

BY HIS MAJESTY'S SERVANTS.

BY W. KENRICK.

LONDON,

Printed for T. DAVIES, in Ruſſel-Street, Covent-Garden; T. BECKETT, and P. A. DE HONDT, in the Strand; G. KEARSLEY, in Ludgate-Street; J. FLETCHER, in St. Paul's Church-Yard; and W. FLEXNEY, in Holborn.

M DCC LXVII.

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PROLOGUE,

Spoken by Mr. HOLLAND.

TO gain the public ear, the man of rhimes
Should always ſpeak the language of the times;
And little elſe hath been of late in hearing
Than terms and phraſes of Electioneering.
Our author therefore ſends me to aſſure ye,
Worthy and free electors of Old Drury,
How happy he ſhould prove, if it content you,
That he be one of thoſe who repreſent you;
The State Poetic, *laws and legiſlature,*
Like the Political *in form and nature;*
Phœbus, the Nine, and Bards of reputation,
King, Peerage, Commons, of the ſcribbling nation.
Now from Parnaſſus' throne the Prince of Wit,
It ſeems, hath iſſued out his royal writ
For a new member.—No offence to give
To a late worthy repreſentive;
Who, ris'n to favour, hath from us retreated,
And 'mong ſt the Lords of t'other houſe is ſeated,—
His ſervice loſt, preſuming you may need him,
The preſent candidate would fain ſucceed him.
Not that he vainly boaſts, on this occaſion,
He met encouragement from your perſuaſion;
Or that both friends, who love, and foes, who hate him,
Have been unanimous to nominate him.
'Tis for this loyal borough his affection,
And patriot zeal, that make him riſk election;
To his conſtituents ſubject to controul;
With whoſe good leave, he means to ſtand the poll;
Truſting ſecure to their impartial choice;
The town uncanvaſs'd for a ſingle voice;
Nay, brib'd no brother burgeſs bard of note,
Nor by corruption gain'd one critick's vote.
Too proud to beg, to modeſt to demand,
By merit only would he fall or ſtand:
Nor enmity nor friendſhip interfering,
He only aſks a fair and candid hearing.
If, after that, you ſhould with ſcorn reject him;
Or make one honeſt ſcruple to elect him,
He'll lay his unadviſed ſcheme aſide,
And frankly own himſelf NOT QUALIFIED

Dramatis Perſonæ.

Lord Courtly,	*Mr.* J. Aickin.
General Melmoth,	*Mr.* Holland.
Alderman Lombard,	*Mr.* Love.
Colonel Camply,	*Mr.* Aickin.
Young Melmoth,	*Mr.* Reddish.
Furnival,	*Mr.* Palmer.
Mineral,	*Mr.* Dodd.
Syllogiſm,	*Mr.* King.
Mrs. Mildmay,	*Mrs.* Fritchard.
Narciſſa,	*Mrs.* Abington.
Sophia,	*Mrs.* Palmer.
Sift,	*Mrs.* Clive.
Suſan,	*Mrs.* Bradshaw.

Servants, Chairmen, &c.

THE

WIDOW'D WIFE.

ACT I.

SCENE I. *The North Parade at* Bath.

Enter Mineral, *and* Furnival *with a news-paper in his hand.*

Mineral.

IS there any thing in the papers, Barriſter?—

Furn. Nothing but medical noſtrums, and liſts of idle company at theſe watering places.—One would think the whole kingdom was infected with the plague. [*Giving* Mineral *the news-paper.*

Min. With two at leaſt, credulity, and diſſipation.

Furn. By both which, doctor we thrive, and have therefore no reaſon to complain.

Min. I don't know that;—they are uſeful indeed to you liberal adventurers, who depend on the doctrine of chances.

Furn. Ay, and to you medical adventurers too. The practice of phyſick depends as much on the doctrine of chances as that of gaming. Beſides, credulity breeds quacks, as diſſipation does gameſters; and both may become too general for us regular practitioners.

Min. They may ſo;—but you ſeem, Barriſter, to have thrown up the cards, with regard to public parties at leaſt;—you play a higher game, I ſuppoſe, in private; eh!—

Furn. Why, faith, cards and dice are but paultry tools in the hands of a real artiſt. The paſſions and foibles of mankind are not only more effectual, but more entertaining implements.

Min. True,—but you can play upon them at the card-table; I have ſeen you do it, Barriſter; I have ſeen you do it.

Furn. What, when you were at the ſame game, doctor? — Ah! You ſpiders of the faculty ſpin your thread as fine as any of the fraternity; woe be to the poor flies that are entangled in your web.

Min. Nay, but we phyſicians do let our patients recover.

Furn. Ay, ſometimes; as we gameſters let novices win, and for the ſame reaſon; to hook them only deeper into play. Do you ever cure any body of coming to Bath?

Min. Why, to be ſure, we have ſome regard to the proſperity of the corporation.

Furn. And to your own doctor:—Every crazy conſtitution that arrives, becomes to you phyſicians a good annuity; a copyhold inheritance, of which you are tenants for life. For your own ſakes, therefore, you muſt keep the tottering tenements from tumbling. But that's all: if you patch them up to ſtand wind and weather, from ſeaſon to ſeaſon, it is as much as you require. A thorough repair might bring on a writ of ejectment, and undo you.

Min.

Min. Nay, Barrister, you are now too severe; do you think the faculty quite void of the milk of human kindness? Have we no nature?

Furn. The milk of human kindness, ha! ha! ha! —Yes, yes, you make a fine milch cow of poor nature indeed.—But come let us hear: who are our new comers?

Min. Ay, let us see—[*Reads the news-paper.*]— arrived since our last, the duke and duchess of Dangle-court; the earl and countess of Squander-field; count Splenetic; baron Podagra; lord and lady Bupe; lord Courtly.— O, pray, is not that he, who had such an ill run the last meeting at New-market?

Furn. The same;— six thousand upon Gimcrack, and four upon Silver-Legs;— faith the turf was a little cruel to him, considering the state of his finances.

Min. So I suppose he has now mortgaged his estate, and is come to take his revenge of New-market races, on the rooms at Bath.

Furn. Entre nous, doctor, his estate was dipped before: but let that go no farther. I am under obligations to his lordship, and have the honour of his confidence.—Have we any more of the right honourables?

Min. No,—but commoners, like herrings at Shetland in shoals.—[*Reads again.*] Sir Peregrine Peevish, and lady; Mr. alderman Lombard; Mr. and Mrs. Fretful; the two Miss Drinkwaters; Master and Miss Ricketty; and so on, with Mr. and Mrs; Master and Miss, to the end of the catalogue.— Do you know any of these I have mentioned?

Furn. Yes, the alderman is consigned to me; do you know him?—

Min. Oh, very well. I was called in when he was last at Bath, and found him laid up with the gout. We set him upon his legs again with difficulty, in a month. But the boisterous wretch swore our fees were so exorbitant, that he would hobble upon crutches through the ward of Cripplegate all his life-

time, ſooner than be ſo fleeced again by any water-doctors in Chriſtendom.—

Furn. Ha, ha, ha! well ſaid Mr. Alderman, you muſt know he is a kind of wit.——He is come down now to ſtand candidate for a vacant borough here in the Weſt; to which he is gone over, to ſhew himſelf to the conſtituents. — He is recommended to me by our old friend Scrutiny Canvaſs, of Lincoln's-Inn; who tells me the curmudgeon rolls in wealth, and, though covetous as a miſer in any laudable purſuit, is laviſh as a prodigal in the proſecution of any abſurd project of his own; at preſent, it ſeems, he is diſpoſed to empty his coffers to get into parliament; ſo that if money will effect it, he is in a fair way of becoming a limb of the legiſlative body of Great-Britain.

Min. And a lame one he is likely to prove; however, I wiſh you ſucceſs with him.——Egad, here he comes.—

Furn. As I expected. He was to meet me here, on his return, to ſettle the buſineſs of the canvaſs.

Min. Well;—I ſhall only juſt renew my acquaintance, and take leave of you.

Furn. Nay, I believe you need not withdraw. I ſhall affect no ſecrets; for whenever a man wants to take the advantage of another, his ſureſt mode of deception is the appearance of openneſs and plain-dealing.

[Mineral *walks to the back of the ſtage and puts the news paper in his pocket.*

Enter Alderman Lombard.

Furn. Mr. Alderman, your humble ſervant.—

Lomb. Oh! counſellor!—your ſervant.——Well I have — but — [*ſeeing Mineral*] you are not alone, I ſee.

Furn. Only a particular friend of mine, and I find an old acquaintance of yours too, Mr. Alderman.

Min.

Min. [*coming forward*] Mr. Lombard your moſt obſequious.—I hope I have the ſatisfaction to ſee you well.

Lomb. Oh, your ſervant, doctor, your ſervant.—Tolerably well, I thank you; my ſupporters are pretty ſtout at preſent, if you can reap any ſatisfaction from ſeeing that.—I do from feeling it, I aſſure you.

[*Stamps ſturdily on the ground.*

Min. And I from hearing it, believe me, Mr. Alderman.

Lomb. Indeed, doctor, I can't; but no compliments.—I don't come to Bath this time to be made ſuch a fool of as I was the laſt.

Min. [*Aſide.*] It will be well for you if you are not made a worſe, conſidering how much better hands you have fallen into.

Lomb. Wou'd you think it, Squire Furnival, when I was here two years ago, this worthy phyſician and his aſſociates had the conſcience to take above a hundred guineas of me, only for coaxing the cramp out of my great toe.

Min. A violent paroxyſm of the gout.

Lomb. You gave it that formidable name indeed, to enhance the merit of your preſcriptions; but what did you adminiſter but a dozen or two of innocent ſlip ſlops, and as many gallons of inſipid warm water?

Furn. Nothing more!

Min. Oh, Sir! Mr. Lombard's was a bad caſe, a very bad caſe indeed! we had frequent conſultations of the faculty upon it.

Lomb. Yes, yes, my caſe was a bad one ſure enough; for, while you and your accomplices had your hand in my purſe, and merited the diſcipline of the horſe-pond, you hurried me without mercy to be duck'd and pump'd like a pick-pocket.

Min. You are pleaſed to be ſarcaſtical, Mr. Lombard; but when the fit returns, I ſhall find you of a different

man of public ſpirit, one whoſe motto is Dulce et decorum—

Lomb. —pro patria morum. Ha! Mr. Furnival. Ay, I remember the paſſage;—I have conſtrued it formerly at Merchant-Taylor's;—tho', by the way, I remember I thought it mighty ſilly, even in thoſe days. Die for one's country! ha, ha, ha!—That might be patriotiſm among the ancient Romans; but we modern patriots live upon our country, Mr. Furnival. Ha, ha, ha!

Furn. Ha, ha, ha! very well, very well, indeed, Mr. Lombard.—But, as to men of your antagoniſt's profeſſion, they are bound in honour, you know, to die at the word of command without grumbling.

Lomb. Right, counſellor, right:—But what—he has a regiment,—he is a colonel, I think!

Furn. A bloody-minded colonel, I aſſure you, Mr. Lombard; one who makes it his boaſt, that he is ready to ſpill the laſt drop in his veins, in defence of his conſtituents. He'll bleed for 'em, Mr. Lombard.

Lomb. Bleed for them! Ha, ha, ha! Yes, yes, he muſt bleed for them, and that pretty freely too, let me tell him, if he intends to ſtand the poll with me.—But ſtay, here's company coming: ſuppoſe we adjourn to my lodgings, and there ſettle our plan of buſineſs.

Furn. Or to mine, Sir, which are nearer.

Lomb. With all my heart. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *Mrs. Mildmay's lodgings.*

Enter Narciſſa *and* Sophia.

Narc. So, couſin Sophy! your papa, I find, is arrived at Bath; we ſhall now ſee what account you will give of yourſelf, for having contracted a violent inclination for a man without his knowledge; and that too for a man whom he never ſaw.

Soph. I contract a violent inclination for a man, Narciſſa! what, I ſuppoſe, becauſe Colonel Camply has repeated his viſits pretty frequently of late!

Narc.

Narc. Nay, nay, it is too late to retract now. It is to no purpoſe to play the prude with me, or the coquet with him any longer. Have not you ſaid an hundred times, that you preferred colonel Camply to all the men in the world?

Soph. I muſt have talked in my ſleep then, Narciſſa: for I am certain my tongue never ſo betrayed my heart while I was waking.

Narc. Oho! you confeſs, then, it wou'd have betrayed your heart, if it had talked ſo. Ah! couſin Sophy!

Soph. Pſhaw, that's provoking now.

Narc. Ha, ha, ha! a little ſlip of that ſame tongue, my dear.—But, make yourſelf eaſy; for waking or ſleeping, I believe it is very innocent of betraying your regard for colonel Camply, my information is founded on better authority, I aſſure you. Thoſe ſpeaking eyes of yours, Sophy, are apter tell-tales.—What you reckon nothing, it ſeems, on the ſignificant nods, expreſſive ſmiles, and languiſhing looks, the colonel and you have been reciprocally exchanging, theſe three months paſt.—

Soph. Go, go, you are a giddy girl, Narciſſa.

Narc. And you a ſober, ſtay'd, prudent, unmarried gentlewoman, juſt turn'd of twenty! Prithee caſt off this formality of countenance, and leave it to the wear of mincing abigails, and maiden aunts, with their other weather-beaten remnants of antiquity. I tell you it does not at all become a girl hardly out of her teens, and little older than myſelf. Believe me, thoſe who affect to be grave when they are young, will be glad to be merry when they are old; excuſe me, my dear, but I am a little in ſpirits this morning.

Soph. Indeed you have always an aſtoniſhing flow of them.

Narc. Have not I?—Well, but come? How is it to be? The colonel will break the matter, I ſuppoſe, to your father; the bargain will be ſtruck, the

match huſtled up, cloaths bought, jewels preſented, and the day fix'd immediately. I ſhall be all impatience till it be ſettled, and we ſtand up to dance at your wedding. I have not had a country dance, no not this half century, as lady Pedigree ſays.

Soph. And yet this buſineſs, which you ſeem to have diſpatched ſo expeditiouſly, may be longer in ſettling than you imagine, if, indeed, it be ever ſettled at all.

Narc. Hey day! What's the matter now? Your lover and you are, I am ſure, ſo far agreed, that you need only tell each other your minds; if you have not done it already. He has a fine fortune of his own, and is ſatisfied with yours, though not a penny be added to your grandfather's legacy. And then your papa, who loves you ſo tenderly as to ſee you once a year, and write to you by ſome of his clerks once a quarter, will hardly plead paternal fondneſs, to keep you longer on his hands.

Soph. I don't know how it will be. There is like to be a ſtrange revolution in my father's affairs. I learn he is going to be married himſelf.

Narc. Himſelf! well, but I hope he'll be ſo good as to ſee you married firſt.

Soph. At the ſame time, I ſuppoſe, my dear, to ſave charges; for I hear he has partly made up a match for me with ſome noble lord.— [*Sighs.*

Narc. And do you ſigh for that, Sophy? Now for my part, were I in your caſe, I ſhould think it mighty clever; that is, on a ſuppoſition the lord were deſerving of the lady. For as you have no violent inclination, you know, for colonel Camply, it is an eaſy matter to break through a ſlight one for a private gentleman, in favour of a peer.—O gad, that I had but an independent fortune of thirty thouſand pounds, as you have, and that two or three of theſe lords wou'd pay their court to me!

Soph. Why, what wou'd you do? Wou'd you have one of them?

Narc.

Narc. Yes, if I lik'd them well enough. Otherwiſe I ſhould be apt to ſhew myſelf a daughter of Eve, and repeat the firſt ſin of diſobedience, if any father of mine ſhould take upon him to know what I lik'd better than I did myſelf. But why do I talk?—Poor I! that am dependent, and can expect barely half that ſum—

Soph. Have yet a viſcount for one admirer, and a commoner for another, worth e'er a lord of them all.

Narc. I don't ſay that.—I have not the vanity to compare Mr. Melmoth, my Sir Frederic that may be, to the flower of the Britiſh nobility; tho' I own I would not exchange him for the beſt of the bunch of baronets.—But yonder comes the colonel, in his uſual ſorrowful ſaunter, with his hands in his boſom, and ſuch a penitential countenance! What, in the name of wonder, can be the matter with him now? Had you a quarrel with him laſt night? Did he win of you at cards, tear the mount of your fan, tread upon the train of your new ſack, or make a loud whiſper of a ſecret that has been publicly talked of among your acquaintance for theſe four months?

Soph. Prithee, what can that be, Narciſſa?

Narc. Oh! the old ſtory, man's conſtancy and woman's caprice, the ſubject of half the love ſongs and halfpenny ballads that has been chanted ſince Cupid was an arch wag, and his mother an errant jilt. Upon my word, Sophy, you ſometimes treat that poor gentleman very ill; and if you don't behave more conſiſtently, I will as ſurely tell him, as it is true, that your cruelty is all affected; that you are as much in love with him, as he is with you; and, in ſhort, that you doat on him to abſurdity.—Therefore look to it, Sophy, look to it. [*Exit.*

Soph. Go thy ways, my chearful, chatty, agreeable couſin.

Enter Colonel Camply.

Soph. Good morrow, colonel.

Camp. My deareſt Sophia, good morrow.

Soph. You look grave, Mr. Camply.—[*Aſide.*] But I gueſs the reaſon, and will, for once, divert myſelf with it.

Camp. It is impoſſible I ſhould not be concerned at every accident that throws an obſtacle in the way between me and my Sophia.

Soph. Oh, Sir, obſtacles are to be ſurmounted;—the more difficulty, the more honour.

Camp. Yes, Madam, and the more danger too.

Soph. O fie, colonel! a ſoldier and apprehenſive of danger!

Camp. Of whatever I may be apprehenſive, Madam, I fear none but that of loſing you.

Soph. And is there any danger of that? Methinks I ſhould be glad of an accident of that kind, that I might ſee how gallantly you wou'd behave on the occaſion. For, to ſay the truth, I have been ſo ſparing of giving you trouble, colonel, that, if I ſhould yield ſo, I am afraid you would hardly ſet any ſtore by what coſt you ſo very, very little pains in the acquiſition.

Cam. How can you take a delight, Sophia, in giving pain to a heart ſo intirely devoted to your pleaſure?

Soph. Poor heart! well, come, tell us its grievance. What is the matter with it? What are theſe dreadful obſtacles you talk of? Are they of my raiſing?

Camp. No, my deareſt Sophia, I have ſo much confidence in your generoſity, that I believe I ſhould not be much uneaſy at any difficulties of your ſtarting.

Soph. Indeed that is tolerably preſuming, however, colonel, and confident enough in all conſcience. Yet,

Yet, whatever you may think, Sir, thoſe obſtacles wou'd be the hardeſt for you to remove, I aſſure you; and, you may depend on it, 'twill be your own fault, if any difficulties, thrown in the way by others, prove either formidable or dangerous.

Camp. Kind, generous Sophia! a thouſand times let me thank thee for that aſſurance. [*Seizes her hand, and eagerly kiſſes it.*] Oh! how this declaration revives me!

Soph. Well then, colonel, as you are now come to yourſelf again, tell me plainly what's the matter. You have been already with my father, I ſuppoſe?

Camp. No, Madam; but I purpoſe to do myſelf that honour to-morrow; tho' it is probable, from what I have heard to-day, it will be to no manner of purpoſe.

Soph. What, you have heard, I ſuppoſe, that he intends to marry me to a title.

Camp. I have, Sophia; and this piece of intelligence is attended with that of another unlucky circumſtance: Mr. Lombard is come down to canvaſs in the borough for which I have declared myſelf a candidate.

Soph. Call you that an unlucky circumſtance? If you have a mind to take any advantage of it, it may, on the contrary, prove a lucky one; for if I know any thing of my father, he will certainly give up to you all his authority over his daughter Sophy, if you will give up to him all your intereſt in the borough of Gluttonbury.—And, indeed, now I think on't, you are rather too young, colonel, for a ſenator.—Beſides, I ſhould not chuſe to have a huſband taken up with the buſineſs of the nation, when he ſhould be employed in mine.

Camp. Sophia!

Soph. It ſeems as if you intended to be no longer my humble ſervant, when you are ſo ready to enter into the ſervice of your conſtituents.

Camp. By heavens, Madam, if you require it—

Soph. You'd give up your country for your miſtreſs, I ſuppoſe.—I thank you, Sir.—No, no, colonel, I did but jeſt with you; I am not ſo unreaſonable as that comes to neither. Here's my hand; I have made my election; do you go and do your beſt to make ſure of yours,—or, ſtay, I was juſt going to take my chocolate; Will you drink a diſh before you go?

Camp. With pleaſure, Madam.—My deareſt Sophia!— [*Exeunt.*

Enter Mrs. Miſdmay *and* Narciſſa.

Narc. Bleſs me, mama, what harm can there be in the indulgence of a little harmleſs mirth? Is it poſſible my chearfulneſs can give any body offence?

Mrs. Mild. I am fearful, my dear, leſt it ſhould offend nobody ſo much as yourſelf. When I was of your age, I was juſt ſuch another wild unthinking thing as you are. Careleſs of cenſure, and preſumptuous that while I preſerved my innocence, I might laugh at decorum, as mere formality; but the world is come to ſuch a paſs, Narciſſa, that virtue itſelf is often of leſs conſequence to the peace and happineſs of our lives than the appearance of it. It is not enough to be innocent, unleſs we ſeem ſo.

Narc. And in what do I appear ſo heinouſly guilty, madam? In laughing at the rueful dejection of the poor colonel, or in giving encouragement to the addreſſes of Mr. Melmoth, to whom you have never before made any objection.

Mrs. Mild. It is true, my dear, I have hitherto made none, becauſe I wou'd not aſſume too great an influence over you, in making a choice of ſo much importance

importance to the future happineſs of your life. But I ſhou'd but ill diſcharge the duty of a mother, Narciſſa, if I did not confeſs, and that without any particular objection to Mr. Melmoth, that I think you would be much happier with my lord Courtly, who hath made the faireſt offers, and of whoſe regard for you, I am now more than ever convinced.

Narc. I am obliged to lord Courtly, Madam, for his good opinion of me; and under other circumſtances he might poſſibly have had leſs reaſon to complain of my indifference.

Mrs. Mild. Well, my dear, I only ſpeak my ſentiments. I have no objection to your engaging the affections or encouraging the addreſſes of any deſerving lover; but I muſt inſiſt on your indulging yourſelf leſs in raillery, at the expence of your friends.

Narc. But I ſhou'd think, Madam, one's friends would be the leaſt apt to take offence, and that the behaviour you complain of might be a good method to put their friendſhip to the proof.

Mrs. Mild. Then you think wrong, Narciſſa. I know, by woful experience, the danger of trifling with a heart that loves one. It was this fatal indiſcretion in me that gave riſe to a groundleſs jealouſy in the breaſt of the fondeſt of huſbands, and deprived you of the tender affections of a father.

Narc. I am happy, Madam, in having that loſs ſo well ſupplied by yours, that I never felt it; but, my dear mama, why do you ſo often touch of late on this ſubject? You know it always makes you melancholy.—If my father were living, indeed!—but that is ſurely impoſſible.

Mrs. Mild. And yet I know not of a certainty that he is dead; tho' I own 'tis moſt probable, as I learned he embarked for India near twelve years ago, and, as I before have told you, I have not once heard of him ſince.

Narc.

Narc. What pity, Madam, you did not retain his name! for now, if even living, and anxious for reconciliation, his patience might be exhauſted in fruitleſs inquiries after you.

Mrs. Mild. Under the forgotten name of Wildman! True, Narciſſa; but your rigid uncle, to whoſe kindneſs we are nevertheleſs indebted for our whole fortune, ſo highly reſented your father's injurious uſage of me, that he inſiſted on my renouncing the name, and, if poſſible, even the memory, of a man who had ſo cruelly wronged me.

Narc. And yet I have heard you ſay, my father was not altogether to blame.

Mrs. Mild. No, my dear Narciſſa. It is the recollection of the ſhare I had in contributing to that fatal ſeparation that diſtreſſes me. It is that which makes me look upon your union with Frederic Melmoth, under the moſt fearful apprehenſions, leſt a ſimilar diſpoſition to mine, ſhou'd make you fall into the ſame errors.—Good heav'n! what wou'd have become of us, if my relations, ſatisfied of the innocence of my conduct, had not forgiven its abſurdity, and continued their protection to me after the departure of Mr. Wildman!—unhappy Wildman! fond, frantic man!—And yet favoured as I have been ever by them, how have I ſince lived in the eye of the world!—in a ſtate of ſolitary, neglected, doubtful widowhood!—I had once a ſon too, and you a brother; but whether he be living, or loſt to us for ever, with his father, heav'n only knows.

Narc. Nay, my dear mama, you now carry your ſurmiſes too far. You certainly do us wrong to indulge your melancholy, as I my chearfulneſs.

Mrs. Mild. I cannot help it, Narciſſa. In you my hopes are now all centered. Let me not be deprived of the only comfort left me, in the proſpect of your happineſs.

Narc.

Narc. Be aſſured, mama, that if it depend on me, you ſhall not. I will check the vivacity of my temper, and be more on the reſerve.

Mrs. Mild. Do, my dear, and in return be aſſured, that I ſhall be no farther an advocate for lord Courtly, than his merit will juſtify. But you muſt excuſe my ſtill indulging a wiſh, that you had leſs partiality for young Melmoth.

Narc. Indeed, madam, he is poſſeſſed of ſo much goodneſs of heart, that I ſhou'd hope it out of his power to make a bad huſband.

Mrs. Mild. I hope ſo too: but the goodneſs of a man's heart, Narciſſa, is not always a ſufficient guard againſt the impetuoſity of his paſſions; witneſs your unhappy father.

Narc. Pray, mama, no more, I beg of you.—— Let us join the colonel and my couſin Sophy.—

Mrs. Mild. I have done, my dear,—lead the way.

[*Exeunt.*

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE I. *Young* Melmoth's *lodgings.*

Enter Lombard, *followed by a ſervant in livery.*

Lombard, *(as he enters)*

NOT know whether your maſter be at home!

Serv. Mr. Syllogiſm, his gentleman, is at home, Sir.

Lomb. His gentleman! eh!—What the ſupercilious coxcomb with the ſtarch phyz, that called at my lodgings this morning, I ſuppoſe.——An affected, formal raſcal!——I had a good mind to have broken his head, for the flippancy of his tongue, and the impertinent gravity of his countenance;——well! ſend him to me then.

Serv. Here Mr. Syllogiſm comes, Sir. [*Exit.*

Enter Syllogiſm.

Lomb. Is your maſter within, fellow?

Syllog. Sir, my godfathers gave me a name, and you ſee I wear my own livery.

Lomb. But you have a maſter notwithſtanding; ſuch a one as he is.

Syllog. True, Sir, ſuch as he is; talis qualis; herus, non magiſter, nec preceptor. He learned more of me than of his tutor, and is too grateful to treat me as a menial.

Lomb. Zounds, Sir, was not you at my lodgings an hour ago, with a draught from Frederic Melmoth?——Don't you ſerve him?

Syllog.

Syllog. Faithfully, and all his ſecrets keep.

Lomb. Is it a ſecret then if he be within?

Syllog. None, Sir, unleſs he were within, and then there might be a doubt whether he was within or no. But when he is actually gone out, Sir, there's no miſtery in the caſe; it is clear as day-light that he is not at home.——

Lomb. What pedantic puppy, are you! Some catch-penny caſuiſt that our young ſpendthrift picked up among the ſtarving book-worms at college, I ſuppoſe.

Syllog. I was indeed a ſervitor at Brazen-Noſe when Mr. Melmoth was matriculated.

Lomb. And was expelled for a pimp, when he was ruſticated for a rake: ha!

Syllog. I can't deny, Sir, that I took more to him than either of us did to our books; and, being thought too diſorderly to enter into orders, I determined to abandon ſhort commons and the claſſicks, to follow the fortunes of my young maſter. That, Sir, is my hiſtory.

Lomb. And ſo you may now deſervedly ſtarve together. Tell your maſter that from me.

Syllog. I hope, Sir, you are not going.——It is ſo very civil a meſſage, that I ſhould take it as a particular favour if you might be prevailed on to ſtay a minute or two, and tell him yourſelf.—I expect him in every moment to dreſs: ſo that if your worſhip pleaſes to ſtep into the next room, and juſt ſit down a little.——

Lomb. I think I will: as I have ſomething to ſay to him,—[*Aſide.*]—that may prevent his troubling me with any more of his draughts. [*Exit.*

Syllog. Now, if any thing ſhould have touched the heart of this old Turk, and ſent him hither with the money for the bill he refuſed to accept juſt now.—But,—Oh, here comes my maſter.

Enter Young Melmoth.

Y. Melm. Well, Syllogiſm, have you preſented the draught, with my compliments, to alderman Lombard, as I ordered you?

Syllog. Yes, Sir; and he accepted the compliments civilly enough, but the draught itſelf he has churliſhly proteſted.

Y. Melm. Proteſted! how?

Syllog. Why, Sir, he proteſted he would not pay it; and though there was no notary by, I am afraid he will be as good as his word.

Y. Melm. Impertinent! This covetous old fellow can't bear the thoughts of my ſpending my father's money, though he gets ſo much per cent for its remittance. Did you tell him I was under an immediate neceſſity for it?

Syllog. I did, Sir: and for that reaſon he ſaid, if he had no other, he would not accept it.

Y. Melm. What can the penurious old ſcoundrel mean?

Syllog. So I thought to myſelf, Sir, exactly! What can this penurious old ſcoundrel mean, thought I.—But to ſave us both the trouble of gueſſing, Sir, ſuppoſe we aſk him: he is but in the next room, waiting your honour's return.——

Y. Melm. Why did you not tell me that before? Go and let him know I am here. [*Exit* Syllogiſm.] What can have brought the churl hither? good manners, or ill nature? It muſt be the latter; for of the former, he has not a ſingle grain.—

Re-enter Lombard *and* Syllogiſm.

Lomb. Well, young gentleman——

Y. Melm. I think not quite ſo well, old gentleman. You refuſed, it ſeems, to pay the bill I drew upon you this morning.

Lomb.

Lomb. I did ſo; and ſhall refuſe to pay any other you may draw in the afternoon.

Y. Melm. Come, come, Mr. Alderman, you may think you are acting the part of my father's friend in theſe indirect endeavours to reſtrain, what you are pleaſed to call, my extravagance. But if I know any thing of his diſpoſition, from the tenour of his correſpondence with me, he'll not think himſelf obliged to you for reducing me to the neceſſity of applying elſewhere for the ſupplies requiſite to ſupport the character of a gentleman.

Lomb. Your father's friend! No, Sir, I act as my own friend; as you ought to do, and as every wiſe man will do.—The character of a gentleman! I ſhould be glad to know how many cent. per-annum your modeſty thinks neceſſary to the ſupport of this fine character. It is not a month ſince you drew for the laſt five hundred, and now you are preſſed for another. By the exigence of the preſent demand, indeed, this ſhou'd ſeem deſtined to ſtop ſome gaming gap; to pay ſome debt of honour; that, right or wrong, muſt be inſtantly diſcharged, to ſupport the character of a gentleman.

Y. Melm. It is in part, Sir; therefore, without any more words, let me have the money; or a bill upon your houſe in London may do as well.

Lomb. May it, Sir? But for the future you will pleaſe to diſcharge your debts of honour with your own bills of credit.——To be plain with you, young man, I am very ſorry your father did not take my advice, in having you bred up to ſome creditable employment.—Had you condeſcended to have been one of my clerks, you might, by conſtantly fingering of money for ſeven years together, have learned the value of it.——Or, had you been bound apprentice to——

Y. Melm. Sir!——

Lomb. I ſay, Sir, had you been brought up to any profeſſion but that idle and unprofitable one of a gentleman,

gentleman, as you call it, you might have had a proper reſource when any ſiniſter accident had befallen you.

Y. Melm. What accident then hath befallen me?

Lomb. Oh, none but what is very natural.——Sir John Melmoth, your father, is dead.

Y. Melm. My father dead!——I am ſorry for it.

Lomb. You have reaſon; for he hath, with great juſtice, cut you off with a ſhilling.

Y. Melm. You aſtoniſh me!—But it cannot be.—I'll not believe it.

Syllog. [*Aſide*] Nor I—for it does not ſeem to be orthodox.

Lomb. You may, Sir: I have ſeen the copy of his will: which hath been duly authenticated, and by which he hath bequeathed his whole fortune to the lady, his ſecond wife; to whom he was married ſome time before his deceaſe.

Y. Melm. Married again! Bequeathed his whole fortune to his wife! and forgot his ſon!

Lomb. Forgot him! No, no. Did not I tell you he had remembered him in a very moderate bequeſt; which is expreſsly juſtified by the mention of his profligate character.

Y. Melm. Profligate! So then I am reduced to beggary by your malicious miſrepreſentations of my conduct! What a wicked, vile, incendiary!

Lomb. Nay, nay, young man, don't be abuſive, and call names. Don't put yourſelf in a paſſion.—To convince you I am more your friend than you are diſpoſed to think me, I will recommend you to the favour of lady Melmoth, your mother-in-law; who is returned to England, and has put the management of her affairs into my hands. Nay, with her ladyſhip's good leave, I may probably ſoon ſtand in a nearer relation to you myſelf than you are aware of: in which caſe, I ſhall take proper care of you, on your good behaviour:———in the mean time, as you are

ſhort

ſhort of caſh, there, —there's a note for a hundred. But no more five hundreds to pay gaming debts, and ſupport the character of a gentleman.——Mark that.

Y. Melm. [*Taking the note, and throwing it contemptuouſly on the ground.*] And there, Sir; take your paultry paper again. I ſcorn to be obliged to a man who has acted by me ſo baſe, ſo villainous, a part.—No, Sir; if what you have told me be true, I muſt bear my misfortune as I may. Yet even then I hope to find friends that will ſet me above being indebted to my greateſt enemy.

[*Walks about in great agitation.*

Lomb. Nay, if you are ſo proud and prodigal as that comes to—to throw bank-bills under foot, I have done with you.

[*Stoops to pick up the note, in the mean time* Syllogiſm, *who ſtood behind, ſnatches it up, and makes him a low bow.*

Syllog. Excuſe me, Sir; your worſhip ſeems to miſunderſtand us here a little. My maſter by no means intended you ſhould take the trouble to ſtoop ſo low; he would not affront you ſo much, Sir. The truth of the matter is, he never carries ſuch triffing bits of paper as theſe in his pockets, for fear of flirting them out with his handkerchief. The conſervation of theſe, Sir, is my duty, as his purſe-bearer. Depend on it, I'll take proper care of it. Teſtudo intra tegumen tuta eſt.

[*Putting up the note in his pocket-book.*

Lomb. Well, well; as it is the laſt you are likely to receive, and I can place it to account, I leave you to make your beſt of it. [*Exit.*

Syllog. [*Young Melmoth ſtill walking about in great agitation.*] Ha! gone! and left the note behind!—Let us ſee if it be no impoſture; no ſham upon us.—No,—Good as the Bank itſelf.—Now do I ſhrewdly ſuſpect that all this old fellow has been telling us is apocryphal, if not a downright lie. Would this ten-

per-

per-cent Mammon elſe ſo readily truſt a diſinherited ſpendthrift with an hundred pounds, on the mere verbal ſecurity of his valet-de-chambre?—This ſtory is certainly trumped up, to carry on ſome ſcheme of Sir John's, to reſtrain the extravagance of his ſon. —He has a mind, I ſuppoſe, to make the youngſter bite on the bridle a bit.——Egad, a laudable deſign! and it cannot be for my intereſt, or his, to ſpoil the project.——— [*Aſide.*

Y. Melm. [*Throwing himſelf into a chair.*] Dead! my father dead!

Syllog. [*Aſide.*] He takes it ſadly to heart. But as there is certainly nothing in the ſtory, I'll venture to humour it, without taking part in his afflictions. [*To young Melmoth.*] Dead, Sir! and cut your honour off with a ſhilling!

Y. Melm. [*Starting up, and walking about.*] It is impoſſible!

Syllog. Impoſſible! To be ſure, Sir, it is impoſſible for a man to die! Such a thing never happens: the grave-rails in the church-yard, and the tombs in the abby are all lyars. Haud diſputandum eſt. Indeed, fathers do ſometimes cut off their ſons with a ſhilling. Mine did ſo by me.

Y. Melm. Prithee hold thy peace. I am ſhocked at your inſenſibility. But if my ruin cannot affect you, ſure your own might; which is involved in it!

Syllog. Believe me, Sir, I am very ſorry that yours ſhould be ſo unhappily connected; but it would be impertinent in me to repine at being found in ſuch good company.

Y. Melm. Ceaſe your ribaldry: I am in no diſpoſition to bear with it.———

Syllog. I wiſh with all my heart you were, Sir; you would be in a better temper. But I beg your pardon; I only meant to divert your melancholy.

Y. Melm. What an unfeeling mortal!—[*A knocking without.*]—See who knocks there.

Syllog.

Syllog. Is your honour pleaſed to be at home, Sir?

Y. Melm. To colonel Camply only. [*Exit Syllogiſm.*] What an unaccountable being is this fellow! grateful and ſincere in his attachment to others, yet as inſenſible of their ſufferings as deſtitute of all regard to himſelf; ſo much is he taken up with the ludicrous diſplay of the peculiarity of his diſpoſition. If we were not too unfeeling ever to be happy, I ſhou'd envy his indifference.

Enter colonel Camply.

Camp. My dear Frederic, how do you do this morning?

Y. Melm. Faith, melancholly enough, and with reaſon.

Camp. Then I am not the firſt meſſenger of ill-news—you have heard of your father's death, I ſuppoſe. But come, though it be an afflicting circumſtance, you parted from him too early in life to feel much for his perſonal loſs.

Y. Melm. I own it; and had his fortune died with him, I ſhou'd have ſupported the loſs of that too, with equanimity: but to receive ſuch a cruel inſtance of his want of paternal regard, as that of bequeathing the whole of it away from me.

Camp. I heard nothing of this.—By a letter I received from general Melmoth, a relation of your father's, juſt now arrived from India, I learn that Sir John is dead; but nothing more.

Y. Melm. Sir, I have learned much more. It ſeems, the late Sir John Melmoth, not long before his death, was married to a ſecond wife, to whom he left his whole fortune.

Camp. Are you well aſſured of this?

Y. Melm. Too well aſſured of it.—— A father! heavens, and earth!

Camp. Nay, but compoſe yourſelf. Things may not be ſo bad as you apprehend.——I expect the general himſelf hourly in Bath; who, I dare ſay, when he comes to know your real character, will, if things are thus circumſtanced, be your friend. At worſt, if you have a mind for the army, I will engage, on my own intereſt, to ſet you preſently at the head of a company. Then, Narciſſa will have a handſome fortune; and I cannot ſuppoſe, after matters have been carried ſo far between you, that this accident will prove any obſtacle to your marriage.

Y. Melm. It is there, there, my dear colonel, I feel this reverſe of fortune the moſt ſeverely. For, though Narciſſa ſhould be too generous to reject me merely from mercenary motives, ought I to have leſs generoſity than ſhe? ought I to take the advantage of her partiality for me, to make a prey of her fortune, and permit her to throw herſelf away on a young fellow without a penny in his pocket, or a profeſſion by which he might have the proſpect of getting one? No, colonel, till I am maſter of a competency, at leaſt equal to hers, I will relinquiſh my pretenſions.——But when that may be, or what may happen in the interval! O colonel——

Camp. Prithee, Frederic!——

Y. Melm. What a cruel diſappointment is this! When Narciſſa had juſt conſented to reward my paſſion, and I expected my father in England to ratify our fond engagements.

Camp. Nay, but no more of this. Why ſhould you diſtreſs yourſelf at the doubtful conſequences of perhaps an imaginary evil? I cannot help thinking you are under ſome miſtake: but be it as it will, I will venture to anſwer for it Narciſſa is ſtill yours. Keep only this piece of information a ſecret from her, 'till it be farther confirmed. When I ſee you again, we may be able to judge of it, and proceed with more certainty. [*Exit.*

Young Melmoth *ſolus.*

Keep it a ſecret from Narciſſa!——No, I will fly and diſcloſe it to her immediately; ſhe may elſe hear of it from ſome other quarter, and I would not be thought guilty of deceiving her in the ſlighteſt inſtance. She ſhall know the worſt of my misfortune without delay.—Who waits there?

Enter Syllogiſm.

Here, Syllogiſm, get ready to dreſs; I am going out.

Syllog. I don't think I can equip your honour decently with mourning 'till to-morrow, Sir.

Y. Melm. No matter, let me have the clothes I wore yeſterday. I am only going to acquaint Narciſſa of my ill fortune.

Syllog. Under correction, Sir; would it not be as well if ſhe heard of it from ſomebody elſe? Or, if ſhe never was to hear of it at all, I ſhould think it might be better ſtill. Narciſſa is undoubtedly a worthy young lady: but I would not have you place too great a confidence on the generoſity of the ſex. If you have loſt your fortune abroad, Sir, it is probable you will not find your miſtreſs at home.

Y. Melm. Then ſhall I know the utmoſt rigour of my fate, and that at once.

Syllog. But to what purpoſe, Sir?——Things may not poſſibly be ſo deſperate as you conceive; or if they are, why make them worſe, by bringing one misfortune ſo cloſe on the heels of another?

Y. Melm. Inhuman father! — Attend me, I ſay, in the dreſſing-room. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *Colonel* Camply's *Lodgings.*

Enter General Melmoth *and Colonel* Camply.

G. Melm. I am glad, my dear colonel, to find you thus happily ſituated; and alſo to hear that Mr. Melmoth has merit enough to engage you ſo warmly in his favour. A young fellow capable of making ſuch valuable friendſhips, can never be ſo bad as he has been repreſented. I own we had but very ſorry accounts of my wild kinſman tranſmitted us to India.

Camp. My friend Frederic, Sir, is young and volatile; but having ſenſe and principle, is in the way of reformation: for he has not only good qualites enough to make himſelf friends among the men, but to engage the eſteem of a young lady of the firſt diſtinction for perſonal merit.

G. Melm. I am pleaſed to hear it. An amiable and virtuous monitor of the other ſex is certainly the beſt reformer of ours.

Camp. And I am no leſs pleaſed, for the ſake of both, to find his father hath not left him deſtitute, as he hath been informed.

G. Melm. And yet if lady Melmoth, his new mother-in-law, had not ſet out for England before Sir John's deceaſe, that would probably have been the caſe; her ladyſhip having taken advantage of the boy's irregularities to get her huſband to make his will intirely in her favour. Being no ſtranger however to her art and avarice, I prevailed on him to make a ſubſequent teſtament juſt before his death; by which the lady is more moderately provided for, and the bulk of his fortune more equitably left to his ſon. I am myſelf executor to this laſt will, and ſhall take a proper opportunity to undeceive the young man, as well as his father's agent; on whom I find

he

the widow hath greatly impoſed, by means of the former will.

Camp. This will be moſt agreeable news to my young friend.——I am impatient to communicate it.

G. Melm. With your leave, colonel, I had rather that were deferred. I could not hope indeed to find a youth of his education and fortune as grave and prudential as a rigid moraliſt; yet, having received ſuch an indifferent impreſſion of his character, I could wiſh to put his diſpoſition a little to the proof. His preſent miſtake affords a favourable opportunity. I would therefore have him kept a while in the dark, as to his real circumſtances.

Camp. Will not that be cruel, general?—Conſider the young gentleman's anxiety.

G. Melm. I do; but he will be ſo much the happier for it when he comes to be undeceived.—Beſides, I have my reaſons; and you may depend on it, if he has real merit, the required delay will turn out to his advantage. It may be the means alſo of trying the diſpoſition of his miſtreſs; whom I ſhould wiſh to have a diſintereſted regard for him.——If ſhe loves him in ſpite of his ſuppoſed poverty, her conſtancy may be rewarded with a better fortune.

Camp. Nay, Sir, I ſhall be ruled by you, ſince you ſeem ſo much concerned for his welfare.

G. Melm. I am indeed greatly concerned for it, colonel: for though I am but a diſtant relation to him, he is perhaps the neareſt now living to me.—Beſides, I am bound to it, in gratitude to his father; to whoſe friendſhip I was much indebted for my own ſucceſs in life. Nay, I am not only obliged to Sir John Melmoth for my fortune, but even for his name; which I long ago aſſumed, on my departure from Europe.

Camp. Aſſumed his name! was yours not always Melmoth?

G. Melm. No, Camply. Many years before you knew me, it was Wildman; which, on the ſuppoſition of having kill'd my antagoniſt in a duel, I chang'd, and wiſh'd might be forgotten.

Camp. You raiſe my curioſity, general.

G. Melm. Another time I may be more explicit: for oh! my Campley, I have a painful ſecret labouring here, that needs a friendly ear and heart like thine, to eaſe me of its burthen.—Good heav'n! or have, or have I not a wife or daughter! [*Aſide.*

Camp. I am ſorry to ſee you thus affected, general: but, I hope, at nothing very eſſential to your happineſs. Yet, whatever it be, you know you may command my confidence and ſervice.

G. Melm. I know it, colonel: but I now muſt leave you. Some letters, that arrived at Bath before me, require immediate attention: thoſe diſpatch'd, I'll call on you again. Nay, no ceremony. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. *Mrs.* Mildmay's *lodgings.*

Enter Narciſſa *and* Sophia, *preparing to go out.*

Narc. A meſſage from your papa, Sophy?

Soph. Yes, my dear; he is returned from his borough, it ſeems, and muſt ſpeak with me.

Narc. What does he want you to canvaſs for him, or to produce you to your lordly huſband, that is to be? Pray do you know who he is?

Soph. What think you of lord Sweepſtakes?

Narc. A gameſter?

Soph. A Gameſter, child! What imputation is that, among people of faſhion?

Narc. Nay, but, if what I have heard of his lordſhip be true, he'd give up his pretenſions to any of our ſex for the queen of trumps at any time.

Soph.

Soph. Then we ſhall never make a match, that's certain; but, in obedience to my papa, you know it is my duty to hear what he has to ſay for himſelf.

Narc. Oh, commend me to your obedience; a moſt dutiful daughter I profeſs; witneſs your attachment to colonel Camply, my dear.

Soph. I wou'd not be ſo firmly attached to colonel Camply as you are to Frederic Melmoth for all the world.

Narc. Yes, you would, Sophy, for one half of it; nay, for either of the four quarters, Europe, Aſia, Africa, or America. The world is a great thing, child, and contains a number of pretty little things in it.

Soph. The beſt of which I wou'd venture to lay, if I had it, that you have ſome appointment this morning with your lover.

Narc. I make appointments with men, my dear! oh, fie! but I ſhall ſtumble upon him by accident, ten to one elſe, at your aunt Pedigree's.—To tell you the truth, I want my ſpark to do ſomething to get himſelf into the good graces of my mama. He does not ſtand ſo fair in her books as I cou'd wiſh; and his rival, lord Courtly, has a powerful advocate of her.

Enter Servant.

Ser. Ladies, the chairs are at the door.

Narc. Ay, come, Sophy; we only loſe time here. Let us about our buſineſs. [*Exeunt.*

Enter Suſan, *with papers in her hand.*

Suſ. So, there they go, to pay their morning viſits, and have left me to ſet things to rights after them.

them.—What a litter do these girls make with their love-letters and their billet-doux! I protest, if it were not for the pleasure that some people take in knowing other people's business, I would not stoop to pick up their blotting-papers off the floor; but Mrs. Sift, my lady's woman, would lead me an uncomfortable life of it, if I did not furnish constant information for her inquisitive temper.—What a pity 'tis I can't read writing myself—I might then perhaps take as much pleasure in these things as she does. But she has the advantages of education, and was brought up at a boarding-school. To be sure, the daughter of a Quaker clergy-woman, as she is.—Ods my life, here's somebody coming.—[*Crumpling up the papers, and cramming them into her pocket.*

Enter Mrs. Mildmay, *indisposed, supported by* Sift.

Sift. A chair—a chair, Susan, for my lady, quickly.

Suf. Here—here—Madam—fainting as I live!—Good heavens! my dear lady.

Mrs. Mild.—[*Sitting down in a chair.*]—Oh! Wildman! oh! my—

[*faints, and falls back in the chair.* Sift *and* Susan *apply salts, &c.*

Sift. Oh! help, here!—Susan, where are the young ladies?

Suf. Both just gone out, and I know not whither.

Sift. Bless me, how unlucky!—Ring the bell.—Here, John! Thomas! where are you?—[*To a servant who appears at the door.*]—Run immediately to Dr. Mineral's, tell him my mistress is taken suddenly ill; he must come away directly.

Suf. Quite gone!—For heaven's sake, Mrs. Sift, what has happened?

Sift. Nothing in the world that I know of, except that a gentleman had like to have run against

us,

us, as he was paſſing to his coach, out of colonel Camply's; upon which my miſtreſs was ſeized with ſuch a fit of trembling, that I had much ado to ſupport her home.—But ſhe recovers.

Mrs. Mild. — [*Speaking wildly, and laying hold of* Sift's *hand*]—And do I live to ſee thee once again?—To hold thee thus!—Indeed I never wrong'd thee.

Sift. Madam!

Mrs. Mild. —[*Looking confuſedly round*]—Where? Where is he? Gone again!

Suſ. Poor lady!

Mrs. Mild. Run, fly, call him back.—Tell him I muſt, I will ſpeak to him.

Sift. Whom? Madam!

Mrs. Mild.—[*Recollecting herſelf*]—Oh!—nothing, Sift.—I talked at random.—This grievous ſwimming in my head diſtracts me.—But 'twill go off.—Give me the ſalts—there—now—go—you may leave me.

Sift. Had you not better permit us to ſtay, Madam? You may relapſe.

Mrs. Mild. No; leave me, I ſay.—[*Riſing from her chair*]—I find myſelf much better.—[*Exeunt* Sift *and* Suſan]—He lives—my huſband lives, and I may ſtill be happy! What full amends for all my ſufferings paſt! for all the anxious moments of his abſence! But hold;—alas! this tranſport may be groundleſs.—May he not live, and yet not live for me?—Did he not ſhun me, think me falſe, abandon me? Yet then he loved me; ah, too fondly loved me! 'Twas my prepoſterous conduct drove him hence.—Still in the midſt of all his wild upbraidings; amidſt the raving of his jealous frenzy; even when he madly flung me from his arms, his heart o'erflow'd with tenderneſs.—Cruel tenderneſs!—now turn'd, perhaps, to hate, or cold indifference!—Long loſt to me, he now may be another's, and I excluded ever from his thoughts, a ſcorn'd, rejected,

and forgotten ſtranger!—It is, it muſt be ſo; another's wife has robb'd me of his heart;——even now, perhaps, he fondly dotes upon her, tells her the ſtory of his former love, and teaches her to triumph in my ruin.—Diſtracting thought! I cannot, will not bear it.—[*Burſting into tears.*]—No—they muſt, they ſhall be parted. [*Exit.*

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT

ACT III.

SCENE I. Furnival's *Lodgings.*

Enter Furnival *and* Lombard.

Furnival.

THIS meſſage from lord Courtly comes very opportunely, Mr. Lombard; and the expedient it has ſuggeſted, is a moſt admirable one.

Lomb. Why, as you ſay, if his lordſhip has the electors of Gluttonbury under his thumb, and is looking out for a wife, I don't know that we could both do better than to make up a match between him and my daughter Sophy. For, as I am alſo going to marry again, a daughter by a firſt wife will be a kind of incumbrance on the family, you know. I had partly agreed indeed with lord Sweepſtakes, to take her off my hands for ſixty thouſand pounds.—The girl has thirty of her own; left her by her grandfather.—

Furn. Lord Sweepſtakes!

Lomb. Ay.—In going to market for titles, I thought one lord as good as another.

Furn. Of the ſame rank, I grant you; but a viſcount is as much preferable to a baron as ſeven pearls on a coronet are to four, which is almoſt two to one: ſo that the odds in a match with lord Courtly will be greatly in your favour.

Lomb. Then I'll be off with the baron.

Furn. By all means.—I'll take the firſt opportunity of making the propoſal to my lord Courtly; and depend on't, you ſhall be return'd member for Glut-

tonbury.—But here his lordſhip comes. I'll introduce you to him.

Enter lord Courtly, *introduced by a Servant.*

Furn. My lord Courtly! you lordſhip's moſt obedient ſervant.

Court. Well, Furnival, you arrived before me, I ſee.—Sir— [*Bowing to* Lombard, *who bows very low.*

Furn. The worſhipful Mr. Lombard, my lord, alderman of London. Give me leave to preſent him to your lordſhip, as a profeſs'd admirer of your character and virtues.

Lomb. My lord, your lordſhip's humble ſervant.

Court. You are well met at Bath, Mr. Alderman, what you are come for the waters, I ſuppoſe? You citizens live ſo luxurioufly, ſince the increaſed importation of turtle, that you ſoon have a good excuſe for viſiting Bath.

Lomb. No faith, my lord, that's not my errand now.

Court. Pray, what might bring you hither then, Mr. Lombard?

Lomb. What brought me hither, my lord! my own carriage, my lord, my own carriage, I aſſure you, ha, ha, ha!

Furn. That is, Mr. Lombard never travels in the ſtages, my lord.

Lomb. No, never travel in the ſtages, my lord, except now and then to Hampſtead or Camberwell, when my horſes are out of order.

Court. Well, Mr. Alderman, and pray what wind blew your carriage hither, then?

Lomb. Wind, my lord!—good again faith, very good indeed. It was a wind, my lord;—a whirlwind, my lord, a whirlwind! It took us up at Hyde-park-corner, and ſet us down here at the town's end.—— Jehu, we came, envelop'd with clouds of dirt all the way.

Court.

Court. I thought you were more tender of your horſes, Mr. Lombard!

Lomb. Ay, my lord, my own horſes; but theſe were hacks, my lord, hacks! four legged machines, that are wound up every morning with a few oats and a whiſp of hay, and ſet going along a turnpike-road, with a boy on their backs all day, till, like a Dutch clock, they run themſelves down at night. Why—why—ſome of our heathen philoſophers ſay, we are not much better ourſelves, my lord, ha! ha! ha!

Court. It is Mr. Alderman's way, I preſume, to be jocular.

Lomb. Nay, my lord, I hope no offence. I uſe no ceremony to be ſure. And indeed, as Mr. deputy Purſeproud ſays, a man that has the revenue of a Subah in his pocket, need not ſtand upon ceremony with any body but the Great Mogul.

Court. True, Mr. Alderman, therefore ſtand upon no ceremony with me.

Lomb. I won't, my lord, I won't: for though your lordſhip may be a great man at court, I am a great man in the city: and the courtiers and citizens have always been upon a footing, to carry on a ſmuggling trade together. It has been the cuſtom time out of mind, to make an exchange between your manners and our money, my lord; and egad you generally have had the better of the bargain too, let me tell you that.

Court. Your friend is quite a wit, Barriſter. I did not think the ſpirit of raillery had been ſo prevalent within Temple-bar.

Furn. Oh, my lord, there have been ſtrange revolutions of late in the city. The citizens have their wits and men of letters among them now a-days, as well as the courtiers.

Lomb. Men of letters! ay, and letters of credit too, my lord; which is more than can be ſaid by moſt of the literati at your end of the town. Yes, my

my lord, and we have made great improvements in the arts, too.

Court. Nay, I thought the city was always famous for the arts.

Lomb. What the arts of pin-making and the manufacturing of thimbles, ha! ha! ha! No, my lad, no; theſe have been long ago trundled down in the broad-wheeled waggons to Birmingham; to make room for architecture, painting, paving, and ſculpture.

Court. Sculpture! Mr. Alderman! ſure the grim ſavages at St. Dunſtan's ſtill ſtand centinel, to ſtrike the hours on the clock!—Then the giants in Guildhall look as tremendous as ever? Gog and Magog are but bad proofs of your improved taſte in ſculpture, Mr. Alderman. Thoſe monuments of Gothic barbariſm, ſhou'd be demoliſhed before you ſet up for Virtù.

Lomb. Egad that's true. I thank your lordſhip for the hint: they muſt come down. But you know my lord, Rome was not built in a day—but when I come to be lord-mayor, or get into parliament.

Court. How Sir, not in parliament?

Furn. It is indeed a loſs to our country, my lord: a man of Mr. Lombard's abilities cou'd not fail of making a ſhining figure.

Lomb. You are very obliging, Mr. Furnival; but though I am not at preſent in the houſe, I hope, with yours and his lordſhip's aſſiſtance, I ſhan't be long out of it.

Court. With my aſſiſtance, Mr. Alderman!

Furn. Yes, my lord, Mr. Lombard, has offered himſelf a candidate for the borough of Gluttonbury, in which I know your lordſhip has great intereſt.

Court. Then you are better acquainted with my intereſt than I am, Barriſter.—I hope Mr. Lombard does not mean to ſolicit my influence.

Furn. [*To* Lombard *aſide*] You ſee his lordſhip is on the reverſe, Mr. Lombard, it wou'd be better perhaps

haps you were out of the way, while I break the ice for you.

Lomb. Egad like enough: I'll leave you—[*aside to* Furnival]—Why, my lord, to be ſure, I have but ſmall pretenſions; but, as a man who wou'd exert his utmoſt abilities in the ſervice of his country, if your lordſhip ſhou'd think favourably of me, I ſhall be ready to fulfil any engagements Mr. Furnival may enter into in my behalf.——And ſo, my lord, your lordſhip's moſt obedient.—[*Going, returns.*] And, depend on't, my lord, that as ſoon as ever I come to the chair, or get into the houſe, I'll attack the giants. [*Exit.*

Court. Ha, ha, ha! what a mixture of wit and abſurdity! Prithee, Barriſter, what do you mean by bringing me acquainted with this heterogeneous animal? You know I have no intereſt in his dirty borough of Gluttonbury.

Furn. That's true, my lord; but he does not know it: and as I am likely to reap ſome emolument from him myſelf, my regard for your lordſhip ſuggeſted a thought may poſſibly be agreeable to you.

Court. Take care, Furnival, of making my honour a cloak for your knavery: you have done it too often, even to the wearing it ſo threadbare, that, if I were not kept in countenance by the example of other perſons of rank, I ſhould be really aſhamed of myſelf.

Furn. Nay, but the preſent expedient is an honourable one, my lord.

Court. For the firſt, then, of your ſuggeſting, pray let us know what it is?

Furn. You will excuſe me, my lord, if I am miſtaken, as I don't mean to be impertinent: but I own I conceived, that either your lordſhip's conſtitution or eſtate might, by this time, have ſuggeſted the expediency of your entering again into the ſtate of matrimony. I took the liberty therefore to give a hint of your having ſuch an intention to Mr. Lombard, who

who has a marriageable daughter, with whom he ſeems diſpoſed to give, at leaſt, ſixty thouſand pounds.

Court. I underſtand you; and ſo you would have me impoſe on him, as having influence enough to get him returned member, in order to prevail on him to accept me for a ſon-in-law! a very honourable expedient, truly!

Furn. Why not, my lord; as I dare ſay we ſhall be ſure of carrying our election?—But I beg pardon if your lordſhip does not chooſe——

Court. I own, Barriſter, there are prudential reaſons for my repairing my fortune with that of a wife; but ſo long as Narciſſa keeps ſuch hold of my heart, I can't reſolve on making my addreſſes to any other women.

Furn. I thought, my lord, that her avowed preference of a rival had determined you to think no more of her.

Court. I thought ſo too: but I find my paſſion to be inſuperable. At the ſame time her mother gives me encouragement: ſo that, till her hand be actually given to another, I cannot think of putting it out of my power to receive it.

Furn. I am ſorry, my lord, my intention to oblige you is fruſtrated.

Court. And yet, Furnival, I ſtand in preſent need of your aſſiſtance. I want money, ready money, to ſupply the common exigences of public places. My curſed ill luck has made a beggar of me.

Furn. Alderman Lombard will furniſh you with any ſum you require.

Court. I am afraid not. He knows better than to lend his money to a loſing gameſter, without more ſubſtantial ſecurity than I can eaſily give him.

Furn. Never fear, my lord: I will ſo manage him, that he ſhall be your ſpaniel, to fetch and carry, and lay down his bank-bills at your feet. Don't your lordſhip ſee that Mr. Lombard is a wit?

Court.

Court. And do you urge that as a proof of his folly?

Furn. I do, my lord.—When animals are once out of their element, their very ſtrength degenerates into weakneſs. A man's forte becomes his foible. Now probity and plain common ſenſe I take to be the proper element of worthy citizens and worſhipful common-council-men; if any one of them ſoars, therefore, after artificial qualifications beyond thoſe, he becomes like a bladder-blown fiſh, that floats on the ſurface of the water, till he is ſnapped up by a ſea gull.

Court. Well, he is in good hands; but be ſparing of him as you can.—You will let me know how you proceed.

Furn. Aſſuredly, my lord, I can do nothing without you. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *Mrs.* Mildmay's *Lodgings.*

Enter Mrs. Mildmay.

Mrs. Mild. A little thought has calm'd my ruffled ſpirits.—Kind Providence, I thank thee! But whether thou haſt gratified my longing eyes to make me happy or miſerable, thou only knoweſt. If my once fond huſband ſhould ſtill harbour his groundleſs reſentment againſt me,—yet that I can remove by the cleareſt proofs of my innocence;—but if, thinking me unworthy of his heart, he ſhould indeed have beſtowed it on another, it were in vain to diſcover myſelf.—No, if it be ſo, I will retire from the world, unſeen and unknown.

Enter Sift.

Sift. I am glad to find your ladyſhip ſo purely recovered, Ma'am.—What could put you into ſuch a tremulous taking?

Mrs. Mild. A ſudden ſurprize, Sift.—I thought I ſaw a gentleman, ſuppoſed to have been dead and buried many years ago.

Sift. Dead and buried, Ma'am! It muſt then have been his ghoſt.—Did I ſee it, Ma'am? I proteſt I begin to be ſurpriz'd too.

Mrs. Mild. No, Sift, it was no ghoſt! the object I ſaw was certainly living;—his looks are hardly altered; he is almoſt the ſame in appearance he was twelve years ago.

Sift. O Lord, Ma'am, men are often ſo much alike in appearance, that we might be ſadly deceived indeed, if we truſted to our eyes.—Beſides, Ma'am, if he looks the ſame as he did twelve years ago, he muſt either be a ghoſt, or a ſad cheat; for there muſt be a prodigious difference in him in reality.

Mrs. Mild. Did you take notice of the gentleman, who got into his coach at colonel Camply's door, as we came by?

Sift. In ſcarlet, Madam, with the mulatto ſervants. Yes, Ma'am; ſome India governor or other, I ſuppoſe; or perhaps it is Sir John Melmoth, Mr. Frederic's father.—You know, Ma'am, he was daily expected.

Mrs. Mild. No, Sift, that gentleman's name is not Melmoth.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Doctor Mineral, Madam. [*Exit Servant.*

Mrs. Mild. Doctor Mineral!

Sift. Yes, Madam; I ſent for him in my flurry, when your ladyſhip was ill.

Mrs. Mild. Well, let him come up then.—[*Exit* Sift.]—Now muſt I bear with a little formal impertinence.

Enter

Enter Dr. Mineral.

Min. Madam, your moſt obſequious.—I am extremely glad to find you better than I expected.—I ſhould have been here ſooner; but—

Mrs. Mild. They need not have troubled you, I believe, doctor; I was only taken with a fainting, occaſioned by a little ſurprize, which is now gone off.

Min. I don't know that, Madam; I don't know that. Give me leave. [*Laying hold of her hand.*] I will be bold to ſay, there is not a gentleman of the faculty has the tactus eruditus in a higher perfection than myſelf.—[*Looking at Mrs. Mildmay very earneſtly.*] Why, Madam, you muſt have been terribly ſurprized indeed! your very pulſe is frighted out of its wits. It is abſolutely afraid to beat. Low, low,—very low, upon my word.

Mrs. Mild. Indeed, doctor, I find myſelf too much indiſpoſed to bear with trifling.

Min. True, Madam; to be ſure caſes of this kind are not be trifled with. I believe I have hit upon yours to an Iota. Leave the remedy to me.—I only wiſh I had been ſent for a little ſooner; though I ſhould have been here at leaſt half an hour ago, had I not been detained at colonel Camply's.

Mrs. Mild. Colonel Camply's! Sir!

Min. Yes, Ma'am, I call'd in there, as I was going my rounds this morning, and was very agreeably detained by the converſation of a gentleman, who has been theſe twelve years a Nabob-hunting in Bengal, and is now returned home loaden with the ſpoils of the chaſe: one general Melmoth, Madam; who as far as I cou'd learn, for I am never inquiſitive, is a very near relation, if not own father, to Mr. Frederic Melmoth, with whom you are well acquainted.

Mrs. Mild. Oh, gracious providence!

Min.

Min. You ſeem affected, Madam—I hope no return of your diſorder?

Mrs. Mild. I fear it may, doctor, therefore if you think of any thing that may prevent it, I ſhou'd be glad you wou'd haſten your preſcription.

Min. I will, Madam, your moſt obſequious.——I ſhall diſpatch my ſervant immediately with ſome of my nervous elixir, Ma'am, the moſt powerful analeptick in the whole materia medica. [*Exit.*

Mrs. Mild. Can my eyes have deceived me?—— Cou'd I miſtake—miſtake the features of that well known face?—Ah, no! it was my huſband. He too hath changed his name; thinking perhaps, even ſtill, he killed his friend: but Frederic Melmoth, is he too my ſon? is he Narciſſa's brother? If ſo, how timely this diſcovery!——O, for a clue to guide me through the maze, which yet I fear to enter!—Yet I muſt know more.—Sift is cloſe and truſty—ſhe ſhall inquire into circumſtances,—and if his hand and heart are not another's, I may yet be happy.

Enter Sift.

Come hither, Sift.

Sift. Yes, Ma'am,

Mrs. Mild. That gentleman, Sift, we were ſpeaking of, who came out of colonel Camply's—

Sift. Yes, Ma'am.—[*Aſide.*] My lady's mightily concerned about this ſtrange gentleman—She cannot, at her time of life, ſurely, be taken with a red coat and a feather.—Perhaps it is ſome old ſweetheart.—Ha! like enough.——

Mrs. Mild. You obſerved him, Sift?

Sift. I did, Ma'am: a fine perſonable gentleman indeed.

Mrs. Mild. Doctor Mineral tells me his name is really Melmoth.

Sift. I told you, Ma'am, you know, how eaſily you might be deceived.—And ſo, Ma'am, it was not the

the perſon you imagined, and you were frighted for nothing?

Mrs. Mild. The doctor tells me, the gentleman we ſaw is young Melmoth's father.

Sift. As I gueſſed, Ma'am: I have a remarkable good gueſs.

Mrs. Mild. But cou'd not you, Sift, enquire a little into particulars. Mr. Melmoth, you know, paſſes for an only ſon; but if his father ſhould marry again, or be married already—or—

Mrs. Mild. True, Ma'am; but intruſt me with the commiſſion, and I'll inform you of every thing you want to know, I warrant you.

Mrs. Mild. Well then, attend me preſently at my toilet, and I'll give you more particular inſtructions.

Sift. And if I don't fulfil them, if the gentleman has either man, woman, or child about him with a tongue in their heads, ſay my name is not—

Mrs. Mild. But you'll mind, Sift, to be no leſs cautious than curious in your enquiries; and communicate nothing of what you hear to any one but me. —At the ſame time, you may caution Suſan and the reſt of the ſervants to ſay nothing to the young ladies, when they return, of my ſudden indiſpoſition. It is not expedient they ſhould know any thing of the matter.—[*Aſide.*] 'Till I know my own fate, Narciſſa ſhall be kept ignorant of hers.

Sift. You may depend upon Sift, Ma'am. But I ſee a chair coming into the hall. I fancy one of them is come home. [*Exit.*

Mrs. Mild. Poor Narciſſa! If I were leſs anxious for myſelf, I ſhould be ſtrangely concerned for her. It may not be improper, however, to take ſome ſtep to abate the ardour of her paſſion for Mr. Melmoth, as a lover.

Enter

Enter Narciſſa.

Narc. I ſee you are returned before me, Madam.

Mrs Mild. Yes, my dear; I ſeldom make my morning viſits ſo long as yours. I ſuppoſe you have been whiling away your time ſome where with Mr. Melmoth.

Narc. Nay, I have not once ſet eyes on him to-day. Though to ſay the truth, Mamma, I believe I waited for him half an hour, or ſo, at lady Pedigree's; for, as I expected he would call there, I did not find myſelf haſtily diſpoſed to come away.

Mrs. Mild. And you promiſed to meet him there!

Narc. He promiſed to meet me there.

Mrs. Mild. Fie, Narciſſa!——Is this keeping your promiſe with me? Is this being more on the reſerve?

Narc. I did not think, Madam, you required me to alter my behaviour to Mr. Melmoth.

Mrs. Mild. Indeed, indeed, Narciſſa, I do require it: and if you have that ſenſe of duty a fond mother could wiſh you to entertain, you will not think I lay you under any ſevere reſtraint.

Nar. Doth this new injunction proceed, madam, from the generally ſuppoſed want of diſcretion in me, or from any particular reaſon you may have to change your good opinion of Mr. Melmoth?

Mrs. Mild. Perhaps both. You muſt have heard, that Frederic hath been very wild; he left the univerſity at beſt but abruptly: then he plays deep; and it is very natural to ſuppoſe, he may have intrigues enough, to make it imprudent for a young woman to place too great a confidence in his profeſſions of love.

Narc. Bleſs us, Madam, you ſhock me. Intrigues!

Mrs. Mild. Nay, my dear, don't be too much alarmed; Mr. Melmoth may be as deſerving as moſt

young

young gentlemen of the age: but for all that, I would not have you ſet your heart upon him. I have my reaſons, and thoſe prevailing ones: therefore, reflect, Narciſſa, and be well adviſed. [*Exit.*

Narc. Reflect, and be well adviſed! What need of ſo much reflection and advice! My mamma hath ſurely met with ſomething to ruffle her temper this morning. I proteſt ſhe is quite peeviſh.—Not ſet my heart on Mr. Melmoth!—That advice comes now too late. Yet ſtill ſhe ſeems to allow him as much merit as any young gentleman of the age.—How unreaſonable is this! If I am to be married at all, can I expect a better huſband than the market affords? and if I am ſatisfied with my bargain, what is that to my mamma, I wonder!—Oh, here he comes! I'll rattle him off, for not being where he promiſed; and thence expoſing me to this lecture.

Enter Young Melmoth.

So, Sir Frederic, and lover of mine! you are punctual to your appointments, I ſee.

Y. Melm. [*Aſide.*] Sir Frederic! and with ſuch formality too! She hath heard of my loſs then, already.—[*Turning to Narciſſa.*] Yet I could not have thought my Narciſſa would have triumphed over my misfortune. I could not have thought ſhe would ſo ſoon begin to upbraid and receive me coldly. Oh, woman! woman!

Narc. Hoity, toity! what's the matter now? The man's ſeriouſly ſorrowful, as I live.

Y. Melm. Cruel Narciſſa! what can I think of this?

Narc. Think of it! Upon my word, I am full as much at loſs what to think of it as you are. Sure the people are all at croſs-purpoſes, or are eat up with the vapours this morning! My mama was here juſt now, and peeviſhly chid me forſooth, for being too kind to you: and now you come, in woful ſadneſs,

to

to complain of my cruelty! What, in the name of conſiſtency, am I to do with you both?

Y. Melm. I don't wonder, Narciſſa, that your mama hath changed her thoughts of me. A reverſe of fortune is with fathers and mothers a ſufficient motive for a reverſe of ſentiments. But can they, whoſe vows have been reciprocally exchang'd, whoſe hearts have been once united; can they, my Narciſſa, be ever divided from motives of ſordid intereſt? What tho' my father be dead, and, through dotard fondneſs has reduced his ſon to beggary, I have ſtill friends, real friends, able and willing to ſerve me.

Narc. Your father dead! reduced to beggary! I now underſtand you, Sir. [*Aſide.*] Diſingenuous mama! Theſe then were your reaſons for depreciating the character of my lover! [*To Frederic.*] Indeed, Sir, I beg your pardon, I had heard nothing of your father's death, nor of any change in your circumſtances: but I own the converſation I had juſt now with my mama, a good deal ſurprized me.

Y. Melm. Then ſhe muſt have heard it.

Narc. No doubt of it: and that accounts for her behaviour.——[*Aſide*] She may find, however, that people may ſometimes be as much too reſerved as too open.——[*To Frederic.*] But can it really be, Sir, as you ſay?

Y. Melm. Too certainly; though I received the news myſelf from my father's agent but this morning, and came directly to impart it to you.

Narc. Was that prudent? to yourſelf at leaſt? was it impoſſible to conceal it from me 'till after our marriage?

Y. Melm. It was Narciſſa, though no human being had known it but myſelf. Thoughtleſs and indiſcreet as I am, my heart is too faithful to you, and too juſt to the world, to ſuffer me to act the part of an impoſtor a ſingle moment. Nay, I come now with a deſign to relinquiſh my pretenſions, 'till the happier circumſtances

ſtances of ſome future day might entitle me to aſpire to the heighth from which I am fallen.

Narc. To give up your pretenſions, Mr. Melmoth! and was that ſo eaſy a taſk as to be readily reſolved on?

Y. Melm. However raſhly reſolved, you have ſeen it was not ſo eaſy to be executed. For what have I done but ſolicit for that, which I came to reſign?

Narc. And you would now marry me, notwithſtanding I may have fifteen thouſand pounds to my fortune, and you, as you ſay, not a farthing?

Y. Melm. Narciſſa!——

Narc. Oh! you heſitate, do you?——To be ſure there is ſome little inequality of condition in the caſe: but to let you ſee that I am more aſpiring, I am ready to venture with you on the ſame terms.

Y. Melm. And is it poſſible you can be ſo good as to rate my merit above your fortune?

Narc. Nay, don't give me time to weigh one againſt the other. Money is heavy, and worth is light, you know: if you take me at my word, I ſhall keep it: but if I am left to cool and ponderate, I won't anſwer for myſelf.——Grave faces and good advice may have a ſtrange effect upon me. At preſent, I ſay, I'll venture with you.

Y. Melm. Generous Narciſſa! But whether will you venture?

Narc. Any where:—to Scotland, if you are ſo raſh as to inſiſt upon it.

Y. Melm. Spirited girl! charming Narciſſa! but when?

Narc. Now, this very day, as ſoon as you pleaſe. My mama has dealt diſingenuouſly by me. I will therefore beg leave of duty to ſtand aſide a little, 'till I pay the debt I owe to love and honour. If it be a fault, I ſhall truſt to her forgiveneſs this one time.—It is a fault one cannot make a practice of, you know.—So, come, let us go in, and concert proper meaſures for our expedition.

Y. Melm. Charming creature! I'll accompany you to the world's end.

Narc. O yes, I intend you ſhall, if we ſhould live to the end of the world. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. *Young* Melmoth's *Lodgings.*

Enter Syllogiſm.

So, ſo, ſo. I have been playing with a ſeeming dead coal, that hath been all the while burning my fingers. A plague of theſe potential cauteries, ſay I. — Sir John Melmoth, it ſeems, is really dead; my young maſter is a beggar, and I may carry his wallet. Sic tranſit gloria mundi! Had I thought the old baronet really defunct, I ſhould not have been ſo pleaſant with the young one's circumſtances. But he is a deſerving youth; and though I am horribly diſappointed in my own expectations, I declare I am leſs ſorry for myſelf than for him.——What will become of him!—For my own part I am qualified to ſtruggle with the world.——Oh! here comes Sir Frederic——in a mighty good humour too! what the devil, ſure his father's not come to life again!

Enter Young Melmoth.

Y. Melm. Well, Syllogiſm, who hath called ſince I have been out.—

Syllog. Nobody, Sir;—I expected to have been able to preſent your honour with at leaſt a hundred viſiting cards, full of compliments of condolance: but I find the world is not ſo impertinent; it civily chuſes to leave people under misfortunes to comfort themſelves.

Y. Melm. It is the improved mode of good manners, Syllogiſm, not to be troubleſome. You ſeem, however, to ſtand in need of conſolation! what's the

the meaning of this? It is not above an hour or two ago ſince you braved the ſtorms of fortune with the fortitude of a ſtoick, and recommended patience to me with the eloquence of a Seneca.

Syllog. Yes, Sir; but, like Seneca too, I find I cou'd preach that to others which I cannot practice myſelf. But ſurely, Sir, I may conclude, from the pleaſantry of your preſent diſpoſition, that what you heard in the morning cannot be true!

Y. Melm. True! Syllogiſm. How ſhou'd it be true, when you know you obſerved it to be impoſſible.

Syllog. Nay, but Sir, joking apart, if your father be dead, how do you intend to live, now he has diſinherited you?

Y. Melm. I ſhall do the beſt to ſupply my wants by induſtry. I ſhall find friends to put me in a way, and am only ſorry it will be out of my power to reward your fidelity as it deſerves.

Syllog. Nay, Sir, make yourſelf eaſy about me; a philoſopher is eaſily provided for. Jacta eſt alea, Sir. When I have the misfortune to leave your ſervice, I devote myſelf immediately to that of the muſes.

Y. Melm. What, turn poet! then art thou condemned to be poor as long as thou liveſt. Why, the poverty of poets, man, is notorious; it hath been a hackneyed jeſt for ages.

Syllog. Yes, Sir, it hath been hackneyed ſo long, that it is fairly worn out. When poets had no patrons but the great, the poor devils, ſure enough, were obliged to live upon little: but ſince the publick have taken them under their protection, a bard, like another man, may have two coats to his back, and every thing handſome about him.

Y. Melm. And yet, Syllogiſm, 'till the lawyers can decide the diſpute about literary property.

Syllog. I grant you, Sir, that a freehold on Parnaſſus does not intitle the poſſeſſor to vote for member of parliament; but let a man of genius once merit the

favour of the town, and he may levy contributions on it, whenever his affairs require it.

Y. Melm. Levy contributions! is not that too arbitrary? I thought the convocation of criticks had ſomething to do in the ſyſtem of literary legiſlation.

Syllog. Yes, Sir, they are the lower houſe, and have the privilege of deciding in all money-matters. They hold their ſeſſions in the pit, at the repreſentation of every new play, and proceed directly to the conſideration of ways and means.—To be ſure, Sir, we cannot raiſe a ſhilling without the conſent of the houſe.—But if they approve the bill, they paſs it with a plaudit, and their generoſity is boundleſs.

Y. Melm. Well, Syllogiſm, if you are obliged to go upon the town, I can only wiſh you ſucceſs: but perhaps you may be better provided for, yet: in the mean time, you muſt not leave me abruptly—I ſhall want your ſervice, for ſome time at leaſt, I am going a journey of three hundred miles an end; will you go with me, if I ſhould have occaſion for you?

Syllog. Te duce Teucro, to the antipodes, Sir.

Y. Melm. Come this way then, you muſt take a letter for me to Narciſſa.

Syllog. Of leave, I ſuppoſe, ah! poor girl! ſhe'll be diſappointed too! Oh! 'tis a bitter buſineſs.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV. *Colonel* Camply's *Lodgings.*

Enter General Melmoth *and Colonel* Camply.

G. Melm. So then I find, colonel, you are engaged in a matrimonial expedition as well as my kinſman.—Well, I wiſh you ſucceſs, and if you need my aſſiſtance, command me.

Camp. I thank you, general, and hope ere long to be able to return the compliment. Come, come, when

when you have recovered your ſpirits a little, we ſhall have you looking out for a wife as well as we younger folks.

G. Melm. Ah! my dear colonel! [*Sighs.*

Camp. Ah! my dear colonel! with a ſigh too! I have hit the mark then, general? What did you leave your heart in India? or hath a ſudden conqueſt been made of it ſince your arrival in Europe?

G. Melm. Neither, Camply. I was married many years ago, and was too unhappy in that ſtate, ever to think of entering into it again, even if I knew myſelf at liberty.

Camp. I never heard you had been married, general.

G. Mel. Yes, colonel, when I went over to India, I left a wife and infant daughter in England behind me.

Camp. And are they living?

G. Melm. Alas! heaven knows! I have heard nothing of them for years, except from the very man, of whom being abſurdly jealous, I thought I had killed.——He came over with our troops ſome time ago to Bengal, and convinced me by a number of corroborating circumſtances, that I had injured both him and my wife; but to my ſorrow, he could give me no farther information of her.

Camp. How fruitleſs then was that!

G. Melm. Fruitleſs as unhappy! for though my heart was ſomething lighter, from knowing he had recovered of the wounds I had given him; yet I ſhou'd have much eaſier ſupported the reflection of having killed an adulterer, than that of having injured, abandoned, and perhaps ultimately deſtroyed, an innocent wife and daughter.

Camp. But why deſtroyed? from this relation it is not impoſſible they may ſtill be living.

G. Melm. I dare not flatter myſelf with ſuch a ſuggeſtion. Nay, I hardly know whether I ought to wish it true; for if ſhe lives, muſt ſhe not long ſince have

trans-

transferred that heart to another which I ſo unjuſtly ſuſpected, ſo cruelly ſlighted?

Camp. But what ſucceſs has attended your enquiries ſince?

G. Melm. None; though I have made every enquiry the diſtance of time and place would admit.

Camp. Perhaps in your long abſence, thinking you were dead, ſhe may have married again; and thus, by her change of name, have eluded your reſearches.

G. Melm. If it be ſo, I will be no intruder on her happineſs.—I will therefore carry on my future ſearch in perſon; that, if I ſhould ſucceed in it, I may be enabled to act as circumſtances ſhall determine. But what a taſk! How dreadful is't to ſeek that which we hope, and yet we fear, to find! Though to be certain even of what we fear, is better far than labouring ſtill in doubt.

Enter Servant.

Ser. Mr. Melmoth, Sir, deſires to know if your honour is alone.

Camp. Your kinſman, general,——Shall he come up?

G. Melm. By all means. He may have ſome buſineſs with you; I'll retire into your ſtudy till you have done with him; you know I have my reaſons for declining to ſee him at preſent. [*Exit.*

Camp. How unlucky is this!——I muſt not tell Melmoth who is ſo near; and yet, if I don't, 'tis ten to one he'll ſay ſome extravagant thing or other; which, if over-heard, may give the general no good opinion of him. I wiſh my old friend were at Bengal again only for one half hour, with all my heart.

Enter

Enter Young Melmoth.

Y. Melm. My dear colonel, how is it?

Camp. Nay, how is it with you? You ſeem in raptures, and it is not three hours ago ſince I left you in a ſtate of deſpondency.

Y. Melm. Ay, you grave rogue, you—you ſtare to ſee a young fellow dejected at his ill luck in the morning, intoxicated with his good fortune before noon. But Narciſſa's my own, my boy.

Camp. Who doubted it?

Y. Melm. No; it wou'd have been a ſacrilege to doubt it.—So that as to my father—

Camp. Nay, but Mr. Melmoth, nothing againſt your father I beg of you.—[*Aſide.*] The general will certainly overhear him.—[*To Melmoth.*] Well, but you did not tell Narciſſa of your being diſinherited!

Y. Melm. Did not I?—But I did. I told her the whole ſtory.

Camp. The deuce you did!

Y. Melm. Without omitting a ſingle circumſtance.

Camp. And—and—and—[*Aſide.*] Egad, I believe I had better aſk him no more queſtions.—He ſeems in a humour to ſay any thing.

Y. Melm. And—and—and—what a plague do you mean by your and—and—and?—Why do you look ſo confoundedly ſerious? What the devil is the matter with you?—Ah, colonel! colonel! if you did but know all!

Camp. Nay, but I don't deſire to know all——[*Aſide.*] This ſpark's going to ſay ſome wild thing or other, now.

Y. Nay but you ſhall know all; for I came on purpoſe to tell you.

Camp. Well then, ſome other time.

Y. Melm. No, no other time will do: for I intend to be in Scotland by to morrow night, if poſſible.

Camp. In Scotland!

Y. Melm.

Y. Melm. Ay, I am going off with Narciſſa to Scotland, and am come to borrow your chaiſe, if you'll lend it me.

Camp. And what are you going to do there?

Y. Melm. Ha! ha! ha! There's a queſtion! I thought every body knew what penny-leſs young fellows took girls of fortune to Scotland for.—

Camp. Well, but—

Y. Melm. Nay, nay, will you lend me your chaiſe? I'll tell you more of the affair by and by.—I ſhall want a couple of your ſervants, too; as, for reaſons of ſtate, I ſhall take none of my own with me.

Camp. Yes, if I am to ſee you again—[*Aſide.*] any thing to get rid of you now—[*To Melmoth.*] but I ſhall certainly ſee you again before you go.—

Y. Melm. Certainly.—Certainly. [*Exit.*

Colonel Camply *ſolus.*

To Scotland! egad, Narciſſa has an enterprizing ſpirit. If the general hath overheard nothing of our converſation, I muſt communicate this piece of intelligence to him; it may perhaps induce him to vary his plan of operation, and ſave them the trouble of the journey.

Re-enter General Melmoth.

G. Mel. So, colonel, your young friend hath ſoon left you.—I thought I heard high words within.—I hope no new cauſe of diſcontent?

Camp. Oh no, Sir; quite the reverſe. Your lively kinſman is now as much elated with joy, as he was in the morning depreſſed with ſorrow.

G. Mel. How ſo? He can have heard nothing, ſure, of the real ſtate of his circumſtances!

Cam. Nothing at all; but it ſeems he hath informed his miſtreſs of his ſuppoſed loſs of his father's fortune; and ſhe, like a generous girl, hath agreed to give him her own inſtead of it.

G. Melm.

G. Melm. Indeed!

Camp. They are juſt going to ſet off for Scotland; he came to borrow my chaiſe.

G. Melm. And you ſhall lend it them, or I will clap ſix horſes to my own travelling coach, and that ſhall convey them. I like their ſpirit, and would encourage their expedition, were the young lady ev'n my own daughter.

Camp. Nay, but, general, why let them take ſo unneceſſary a ſtep?—They will certainly be better pleaſed, if you ſhould diſcover Mr. Melmoth's real ſituation, and prevent them.

G. Melm. I know not that. No, let them a while enjoy the ſatisfaction they feel in their mutual love and gratitude. There is more pleaſure in the diſplay of true generoſity, than in the poſſeſſion of mines of wealth. Let them proceed, therefore, on their journey.—I warrant it will be a pleaſant one.—In the mean time, however, if it be neceſſary, I'll endeavour to reconcile the young lady's relations to the conſequences of it.—But come, I called to take you home to dinner with me; we will there toaſt the young couple, and drink ſucceſs to their ſpirited enterprize. [*Exeunt.*

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ACT IV.

SCENE I. *Mrs.* Mildmay's *Lodgings.*

Enter Syllogiſm *and* Sift, *meeting.*

Sift.

SO, Mr. Syllogiſm, you are going to have old doings at your houſe, I ſuppoſe.

Syllog. No, no, Mrs. Sift, our old doings won't do any longer; we muſt have new doings now, if we intend to keep doing at all.

Sift. What do you mean, Mr. Syllogiſm?

Syllog. Nay, what do you mean, Mrs. Sift, if you come to that?

Sift. Mean! why rejoicings, entertainments, to be ſure.

Syllog. Rejoicings! entertainments!—[*Aſide.*]—O, the jade has heard of our misfortune I find, and has a mind to be merry with it.—[*To Sift.*]—You are pleaſed to banter, I ſee, Mrs. Sift.—Pray what ſhould we rejoice at?

Sift. Rejoice at! why, the arrival of Mr. Melmoth's father from the Indies—Have you not expected him any time theſe ſix months?

Syllog. Oh, yes; and he ſet out from thence, it ſeems, near a twelvemonth ago; but which road he took, or whether he is arrived at his journey's end, is at preſent a little problematical!

Sift. Problematical! I am ſure you ſcholars, Mr. Syllogiſm, are very pragmatical. Will you perſuade me

me I did not hear the bells ring for him this morning?

Syllog. The bells ring for him! O lud! only think of tolling the bell at Bath for a man who died at Bengal!

Sift. Dead! Sir! What would you inſinuate?

Syllog. What you know, I find, as well as I, and therefore I may venture to tell you.—My old maſter is dead, and hath left my young one nothing to live upon.

Sift. Nay, nay, Mr. Syllogiſm, I ſee you have a mind to banter me now; but come, to buſineſs. You have brought ſomething for Narciſſa, I ſuppoſe.

Syllog. Yes, I have got a letter for her.

Sift.—[*Takes the letter, turns it about, and holds it up to the light.*]—Why there's no reading this letter without opening it!

Syllog. What do you think it is ſealed up for, but to hinder you?

Sift. Pooh! I would not give a farthing to carry ſuch letters. Sealed! What did you never open a letter without breaking the ſeal? Did you never take off the impreſſion on wax, nor coax it with a hot tobacco-pipe?

Syllog. No, Mrs. Sift, they are arts I have not been bred to.

Sift. Well, I have done it an hundred times, who was never bred to the arts at all: though I remember I once loſt the beſt place I ever had in my life, for breaking open a letter, and ſealing it up again with my thimble.

Syllog. And deſervedly.

Sift. Yes, I paid for my peeping that time, it's true; but I ſhould have done it, had I been to die for it. I am aſtoniſhed to think how any body can have ſo little curioſity, as not to long to know every thing that other people want to keep from them.

Syllog. I would as ſoon put my hand into my maſter's purſe, as pry into his ſecrets; and think a ſervant deſerves to be hanged as much for the one as the other.

Sift. That is, if it be done with intent to betray them, Mr. Syllogiſm; but otherwiſe—and yet, to be ſure, one does ſometimes do a deal of miſchief by getting into ſecrets by halves; but that is the fault of one's maſters and miſtreſſes, you know, in not truſting us with the whole.—You will not pretend to tell me, however, that you have no curioſity to know your maſter's buſineſs.

Syllog. Faith I have no curioſity to know more than he thinks proper to intruſt me with. I have plague and trouble enough with that; if I knew leſs, I ſhould live a much eaſier life: for what between his money-matters and thoſe of his miſtreſs, which you know, Sift, are both tickliſh affairs, I have but a very troubleſome time on't.

[*While Syllogiſm is ſpeaking, Sift is looking at the letter, and turning it about in her hand.*

Sift. There muſt be ſomething very curious, Syllogiſm, in this letter. It is doubled into ſo many pleats, and folded up as carefully as the Welch-man's guinea—there is certainly ſomething choice in it.

Syllog. Ay, all love I ſuppoſe, Sift.

Sift. Love! eh! — that's choice ſtuff, to be ſure! —Well, I ſee the direction.

Syllog. And you'll deliver it ſafely—you underſtand me—you need not be at the trouble of quartering my maſter's coat of arms with the milliner's.

Sift. O! the thimble! no, upon my honour.—

Syllog. You ſee the creſt is a lion rampant, beware of the top of your middle finger.

Sift. Nay, but when I ſay upon my honour, Mr. Syllogiſm.

Syllog. I beg your honour's pardon, Madam. To be ſure, after having ſo frankly confeſſed its influence over your curioſity in theſe caſes, it wou'd be

cruel

cruel to diſtruſt you.—[*Aſide as he goes out.*] If I had my letter again however, I would as ſoon leave it with the printer of the Public Adverтiſer. [*Exit.*

Sift *ſolus.*

They think they are mighty cloſe here—It is written with lemon-juice, ſurely!——Well I have a trick for that; my miſtreſs ſhan't ſet me upon the enquiry for nothing. I am too good a ſervant for that too—Ha! our young ladies coming this way!—I am determined to have another peep at it, be the conſequence what it will. [*Exit.*

Enter Narciſſa *and* Sophia.

Narc. Well, really Sophia, this is ſomething extraordinary that you ſhou'd affect to tutor me, for diſobedience to my mama, in the preference I give to Mr. Melmoth: hath not ſhe, 'till this very day, always approved of his addreſſes.

Soph. Therefore I am afraid, Narciſſa, ſhe has ſome better reaſons for her ſudden change of behaviour than you are aware of: at leaſt I ſhou'd be for coming to a farther explanation with her before I took ſo irretrievable a ſtep as you are going inconſiderately to do.

Narc. Oh! my dear, we ſhall take a great many ſteps before we get to Scotland. We ſhall not be acroſs the Tweed ſo ſoon as we might be at the next pariſh church. I ſhall have time to conſider of it again and again, therefore, before the buſineſs is done yet.—Nay, I can aſſure you that even when we get there, if I ſhou'd not happen to be perfectly of the opinion I am in at preſent, we may come back again no wiſer than we ſet out. If the matrimonial apparatus does not wear a very agreeable aſpect—if Meſs. John does not put on one of his beſt faces, and his cleaneſt band;—or—

Soph.

Soph. Nay, but be ſerious.

Narc. Well, I am: and ſay as I did before, that if there were really any thing wrong in what I am going to do, you ſhou'd be the laſt perſon in the world, my dear Sophy, to diſſuade me from it.

Soph. Why ſo?

Narc. Becauſe I ſhould never liſten to a lecture on diſobedience from one as diſobedient as myſelf.

Soph. How! cannot I entertain a proper regard for colonel Camply, without incurring the guilt of diſobedience? I don't intend to run away with him, or even to marry him, without my father's conſent.

Narc. Not unleſs he refuſes to give it you; there is no occaſion for't, my dear. But if by a proper regard, you mean that the colonel is in poſſeſſion of your heart, I warrant your hand will ſoon follow. And, tho' you may want courage to ſcamper away to the North, before you come of age, you may only have juſt patience enough to ſtay in the South 'till you do; when we ſhall find you ſneaking into the back-door of Walbrook-church, or St. Swithins, to commit the like horrid ſin of diſobedience.

Soph. I find, my dear, there is no talking to you on this ſubject: ſo, like a naughty girl, you muſt go on your own way.

Narc. And you, like a naughty girl, Sophy, wou'd go my way too, if you dar'd.

Enter Sift.

Sift. The devil take the inventors of ſealing-wax, and inviſible ink;—I can pick nothing out of this letter—ſo I think I may as well give it to my young miſtreſs. If ſhe can read it, I may poſſibly pick ſomething of it out of her, and that will do as well.—A letter for you, Madam. [*gives Narciſſa the letter.*]

Narc. From Mr. Melmoth!

Sift. Yes, Madam.

Narc.

Narc. You will excuſe me, Sophy, I muſt go and read my billet-doux; it may poſſibly require an anſwer. [*Exit.*

Sift. [*Speaking aſide as ſhe follows Narciſſa.*] So!--now for a peep over the left ſhoulder.——Let the writing be but any how viſible, and if young madam reads any more of it than I, why then, I am grown ſhort-ſighted——that's all. [*Exit.*

Sophia *ſolus.*

Was ever any thing ſo determinedly inconſiderate?—and yet Narciſſa does not want for prudence, when the vivacity of her temper will ſuffer her to make uſe of it.—I wiſh I cou'd any how prevent this raſh expedition, without betraying the confidence ſhe has placed in me. [*Exit.*

SCENE II. *The Parade.*

Enter Lord Courtly *and* Furnival.

Court. Urge this affair no farther, Furnival. I can be of no ſervice to you in it.—I have conſulted my heart, and find it repugnant to all my ſentiments. The love I bear Narciſſa, and the regard due to my own honour, both forbid it.

Furn. Give me leave to ſay, my lord, your ſcruples are too refined for a man ſo well acquainted with the world.

Court. Yes, barriſter, I know the world too well to ſacrifice ſo much of my own happineſs, either to its pleaſures or opinions, as I have done.

Furn. But if your lordſhip has no hopes of Narciſſa, what objection can be made to your repairing your fortune by marrying another? Surely, my lord, neither the laws of love or honour forbid this!

Court. Perhaps not—— but I feel an invincible reluctance to the making my addreſſes elſewhere. It is true,

true, Narciſſa herſelf gives me no encouragement; but her mother is ſtill my friend, and affords me hopes that ſomething may turn out in my favour. I have even juſt now received a meſſage from her, deſiring to ſee me in the evening, on particular buſineſs.—Who knows what may have happened? But be it as it may, I cannot reſolve to devote myſelf to another, 'till it be impoſſible for Narciſſa to be mine.

Furn. And your lordſhip is determined to decline the obliging offers of Mr. alderman Lombard, with regard to the money-matters I was ſpeaking of?

Court. If they are made on a preſumption that I ſhall ſerve him where I have neither the power nor inclination.

Furn. I am heartily ſorry for it, my lord; as this is not the way to pay off the mortgage on your eſtate.

Court. Then it muſt remain unpaid, barriſter, 'till a more honourable method offers for its diſcharge.

[*Exit.*

Furnival *ſolus.*

His lordſhip is in one of his moral moods to-day.——I muſt reſume the ſubject at a gayer moment.—And yet I'm half afraid he's loſt.——Theſe partial attachments to the ſex are the ruin of many a noble ſpirit. While he was only a general lover, he was the moſt enterprizing genius on the turf.——But now——'Tis ſtrange; but we ſometimes find it in the power of one virtuous woman to reform in a few months what the libertine part of both ſexes have been labouring to corrupt for years.——Theſe modeſt wenches make as many converts as the methodiſt parſons——Whom have we here?—the very ladies in queſtion, as I live!—and engaged in earneſt diſcourſe!——It may be worth liſtening to.——I have an excellent knack of hearing at a diſtance.

[*Retires.*

Enter

Enter Narciſſa *and* Sophia.

Soph. And you are really determined, Narciſſa, to put this wild ſcheme in execution.

Narc. Poſitively, my dear Sophia.——I ſhall not break my word with Mr. Melmoth, if he keep his with me. We are to have your colonel's chaiſe waiting for us at the town's end. I ſhall juſt go to the rooms with you for form's ſake, and ſee you ſet in for cards, and then vaniſh; ſlip into a chair, and be with my ſpark in a twinkling: leaving you, my dear, or your colonel, to make the beſt apology you can for me to my mama.——I have left a ſhort one indeed myſelf in a letter ſhe will find on her return in the evening.

Soph. As you have made me your confident, my dear, I ſhall not betray you. But I cannot ſay I approve of this ſtep. Indeed I really think it unneceſſary. I am certain your mama might be brought to give her conſent to your marriage.

Narc. Nay then there is the leſs harm, my dear, in going to be married without it. If ſhe has no objections, you know, but what might be removed by ſolicitation, the ſolicitation would be merely a matter of form, a piece of childiſh ceremony.——Beſides, my dear Sophy, to anſwer all your petty ſcruples about diſobedience at once, I am determined on the thing preciſely, becauſe I would not be diſobedient.

Soph. Ay, make that out, Narciſſa.

Narc. Very plainly.——My mama has not yet poſitively told me ſhe would not have me marry Mr. Melmoth:——on the contrary, ſhe has hitherto encouraged his addreſſes: but as I ſhrewdly ſuſpect ſhe might tell me ſo in plain terms the next time we converſe on the ſubject, I don't intend to give her an opportunity of laying me under any ſuch injunction.——Becauſe, in that caſe, you know, it would be

downright diſobedience to act directly againſt her poſitive commands.

Soph. Well; for ſuch a mad-cap, thou art certainly a very extraordinary caſuiſt.——So joy go with you.

Nanc. I warrant it will. I only wiſh we may bring it back again; and make it laſt as long as the wedding ring and the parſon's benizon hold us together. ——So come along. [*Exeunt.*

Re-enter Mr. Furnival.

So, ſo, ſo ——Here's an affair broke out!—— What will his ſcrupulous lordſhip ſay to this?——— Egad, we juſt nicked the time. The bird is feathered, and juſt on the wing. But the lime and the twigs will be ready, my dear. No, no, my pretty flutterer, you muſt not take flight, and leave us yet, neither.——What if I worked by ſtratagem, and entrapped my little lapwing in her own ſnare.——— Her chairman may poſſibly be prevailed on to miſtake the place of rendezvous.——If I can but decoy her to his lordſhip's apartments, he may ſet her at liberty himſelf, if he chuſes it. It is a pretty Canary-bird, and would become a gilt cage mightily. [*Exit.*

SCENE III. *Mrs.* Mildmay's *Lodgings.*

Enter Mrs. Mildmay, *(with an open letter in her hand) followed by* Siſt *and* Suſan.

Mrs. Mild. To Scotland! and with young Melmoth—raſh, unadviſed girl!——Diſpatch ſomebody to colonel Camply. Tell him I muſt ſpeak with him inſtantly, on buſineſs of the utmoſt conſequence.

Suſan. Yes, Madam. [*Exit.*

Mrs.

Mrs. Mild. Oh! Narciſſa!

[*Walking about in diſorder.*

Sift. But why, Madam, ſhould you make yourſelf ſo very uneaſy? Mr. Melmoth is a worthy young gentleman.

Mrs. Mild. Talk not to me of his worth——

Sift. And the young people, heaven bleſs them! were paſſionately fond of one another.

Mrs. Mild. Ah! too paſſionately——

Sift. Then Mr. Melmoth is——

Mrs. Mild. You know not what he is, Sift: nor can I tell you.

Enter Servant.

Serv. My lord Courtly, Madam.

Mrs. Mild. Shew him up. [*Exit ſervant.* See that colonel Camply be found immediately, Sift.

[*Exit Sift.*

Enter Lord Courtly.

Oh! my lord, I am the moſt terrified and diſtreſſed of women. The delight of my heart, the wiſh of yours, my darling Narciſſa——

Court. Narciſſa! what of Narciſſa, Madam? you alarm me beyond expreſſion. Surely no accident——

Mrs. Mild. Yes, the moſt dreadful accident!—— in the moſt ſudden and unexpected manner is ſhe gone off with young Melmoth for Scotland.

Court. Then are my hopes at an end.

Mrs. Mild. Not ſo, my lord, if their deſign be prevented. They cannot be got far as yet. Your lordſhip will aſſiſt me in immediately purſuing them.

Court. If my preventing Narciſſa's marriage with Mr. Melmoth might induce her to beſtow her heart on me, Madam, you might command me: but I fear hearts are not to be transferred, and ſhe has now

given a ſufficient proof on whom ſhe has freely beſtowed hers. I cannot therefore think of robbing another of what he has ſo good a right to poſſeſs, becauſe I had not the merit of a ſucceſsful rival.

Mrs. Mild. Alas, my lord, Mr. Melmoth can be no rival.

Court. You flattered me indeed, Madam, with the diſcovery of a circumſtance in my favour.

Mrs Mild. It is this very circumſtance, my lord, that aggravates my preſent diſtreſſes; as I now fear, that, inſtead of contributing to your happineſs, it will only tend to my miſery.

Court. What is it then, Madam?

Mrs. Mild. In the preſent ſituation of things, my lord, I cannot refuſe to impart it to you; though I have reaſon for concealing it a while from all the world beſides.—Mr. Melmoth is—Narciſſa's brother.

Court. Narciſſa's brother!

Mrs. Mild. By the moſt providential means, I this day diſcovered it; therefore, my lord——

Court. Nay, Madam, if that be the caſe;——but are you certain?

Mrs. Mild. Moſt certain;—— therefore make no delay. Narciſſa cannot be Mr. Melmoth's; ſhe may be yours, and be happy.—— All depends on the moment.

Court. Then depend on't, Madam, I will give you a good account of my time. Your ſervants will aſſiſt me to procure the means of purſuit, and be aſſured you ſhall ſpeedily hear from me.

Mrs. Mild. One thing more, my lord. If either perſuaſion or force may effect their return, let the circumſtance of their affinity be as yet kept a ſecret from them.——I have particular reaſons for it.

Court. I ſhall obey your commands, Madam. [*Exit.*

Mrs. Mild. Who waits there? John! Thomas! attend upon his lordſhip.——Well, now I am ſomething eaſier. The inconſiderate fugitives will be

over-

overtaken. Inconſiderate indeed! but alas, had it been otherwiſe, how innocent had been their crime! Yet happy is it, that, through all the various accidents of life, there is an over-ruling providence, which often preſerves us from the ill conſequences even of our own indiſcretions. [*Exit.*

SCENE IV. *A Street near Lord* Courtly's *Houſe.*

Enter Furnival, *diſguiſed in a Cloak, followed by a chair, with the curtains drawn.*

Furn. This way, Patrick.—[*In a low voice, and exit.*

1*ſt Chairm.* Which way your honour pleaſes.

2*d Chairm.* Ay, I thought young madam would not be after going out of town to-night. [*Exeunt.*

Enter Syllogiſm, *half drunk.*

Syllog. What a round-about way have theſe fellows taken! but I was only bid to follow them, and and ſo, ite, pre, ſequar.——[*Going off, ſtops ſhort.*]—Hey day! they turn into a houſe!——Sure that is more than we bargained for.——I hope there is no miſtake here.——Drinking to beſure depreſſes the judgment, though it elevates the imagination: if potation, however, deprives a man of his diſcretion, it gives him courage to face the peril it leads him into. Not that I am ſo tipſy as to be very valiant neither, though I did get rather a cup too much in waiting, ere the dog-trotting ſcoundrels were put in motion.——But I have claſſical authority for taking a chearful glaſs in the evening, Ut vites poenam de polibus incipe canam.

Enter

Enter young Melmoth.

Y. Melm. Syllogiſm! What are you doing here? Where is Narciſſa? Did not I bid you watch her coming out of the rooms, and follow her chair?

Syllog. You did, Sir, and ſo I have. It is juſt gone into that houſe.

Y. Melm. Into a houſe! you muſt have miſtaken ſome other chair for her's. What a blockhead! why you're half drunk;——you can't ſee.

Syllog. No, no, Sir, it is no deception; as ſure as you ſtand there, I ſaw the chair that brought Narciſſa from the rooms go into that houſe.

E. Melm. Is't poſſible! For heaven's ſake who lives there?

Syllog. Why, Sir, that I was poſing myſelf about, when you came in.

Y. Melm. As I live, lord Courtly's old lodgings.

Syllog. Yes, Sir, and now I recollect, I believe his new ones too. I think I ſaw ſome of his ſervants about the door to-day.

Y. Melm. Was ſhe brought hither by her own direction?

Syllog. Faith, Sir, I can't tell; but it certainly muſt be with her own conſent, or otherwiſe ſhe would have prevented it.

Y. Melm. And why did not you?

Syllog. Nay, Sir, you know my orders were only to ſee the chair ſafe where it was carried to, and there to leave it. So, Sir, I walked a chalk after it, as ſtill as a mouſe all the way.

Y. Melm. But you knew whither it was going, why did not you make the fellows keep ſtrait forward.

Syllog. Upon my word, Sir, I found it a little difficult to keep quite ſtrait forward myſelf. Beſides, Sir, I thought thoſe fellows muſt know their way about the town better than I did.

Y. Melm.

Y. Melm. What can be the meaning of this? Sure Narciſſa does not intend to jilt me! to give her hand to lord Courtly after all! O no! that is impoſſible.

[*Goes to the ſide of the ſcene, and looks at the houſe.*

Syllog. Impoſſible! ah, Sir! ſo you ſaid, you know, when you heard of your father's death; but, under correction, Sir, it is juſt as poſſible for a young lady to give away her heart, as for an old gentleman to give up the ghoſt.——Inconſtancy and intemperance are both fatal in their conſequences;—[*Hicups*]—But then thoſe conſequences are ſo very common, that there are matches broke off, and funerals performed to every part of England daily; and for that matter, Sir, under correction——

Y. Melm. Ha! the door opens! ſtand back, Syllogiſm, ſomebody is coming.

[*They retire to the back of the ſcenes.*

Narciſſa *and* Furnival.

Narc.——[*Speaking entering.*]——I inſiſt upon going, Sir; let go my hand, Sir; What is the meaning of this inſolence?

Furn. You muſt not riſk the danger, Madam, of going at this time of night alone.

Narc. I can be no where in ſo much danger as in ſtaying with you.

Furn. Nay, but Mr. Melmoth will be here immediately, Madam.

Y. Melm. [*Coming forward.*] He is here already, Sir.

Furn. Ha!

Narc. Oh! Mr. Melmoth what a villainous trick has been play'd us?

Y. Melm. Pray, Sir, how came this lady here? and to what purpoſe?

Furn. You ſhou'd ask that of one of the chairmen who brought her, Sir; and the other of the lady who doubtleſs directed them.

Y. Melm. Come, Sir, no ſhuffling. How came you to mention my name, as a pretence for detaining her?

her?——Expect to be called to a ſevere account for this piece of treachery.

Furn. Faith, Sir, my deſign was merely to oblige my friend lord Courtly, in preventing the lady's elopement.

Y. Melm. And what right had either you or he, Sir, to pry into, or controul her actions?

Furn. Nay, Sir, I ſhall not enter into the matter of right, as the lady has nothing to complain of, but being prevented committing an act of diſobedience.—But, yonder I ſee comes my lord himſelf with the ſervants of the family, to conduct the young lady home.

Y. Melm. Confuſion! how cou'd we be thus betray'd?

Narc. Betray'd indeed! and by what infamous means! I did not think my lord Courtly cou'd have deſcended to ſuch baſeneſs, or my mama have abetted it. But they ſhall reap no advantage from the ſucceſs of it.——Lead the way, Mr. Melmoth, and I'll follow you through all oppoſition.

Y. Melm. Syllogiſm, ſtand to your arms!——

Syllog. Yes, Sir, and I'll make any body elſe ſtand too, or fall, that offers to moleſt you.

[*Brandiſhing a cudgel.*

Enter Lord Courtly *with ſervants.*

Court. Ha; Narciſſa! and Mr. Melmoth! fortunate encounter.——[*To the ſervants.*] Stand back till you are called for. [*Servants retire.*

Y. Melm. Perhaps not ſo fortunate as you imagine, my lord.——

Court. For you I am ſure it is: and as for myſelf, the ſervice I may do you both, will at leaſt entitle me to your gratitude.

Narc. If you are ſerious, my lord, your abſurdity borders on impertinence; if you mean to be ironical you are extremely ridiculous.

Court. I flatter myſelf, Madam, you will ſoon think otherwiſe; and that however unſucceſsful I have hitherto been, I ſhall, for my aſſiduity to night, be rewarded with your good opinion.

Narc. Indeed, my lord, you are egregiouſly miſtaken. What extravagance! To employ your baſe paraſite to decoy me to your houſe, and flatter yourſelf to obtain my good opinion of it. Indeed, indeed, my lord, this is one of the greateſt inſtances of ſelf-adulation I ever met with.

Court. Decoy you to my houſe, Madam! I don't underſtand you.

Furn. Indeed, Madam!—[*To Narciſſa.*] I can anſwer for his lordſhip's innocence in that particular.

Narc. Yes, yes, we ſhall certainly take your word for his innocence.

Y. Melm. Be prepared, Sir, to anſwer for your own —But come, Narciſſa,—[*offering to go*] we loſe time.

Court. [*interpoſing.*] Let me intreat you not to be too precipitate. Mrs. Mildmay entreats, nay, inſiſts that you will proceed no farther without conſulting your friends.——

Y. Melm. One of which, I preſume, is to be your lordſhip. No, no, my lord, we have loſt too much time by your contrivance already.——Therefore ſtand aſide, if you pleaſe.——

Court. Nay, but for your own ſakes.——

Narc. For our own ſakes, my lord, or your's! Ha, ha, ha!

Court. This is no place to enforce my own pretenſions; I act now only in obedience to Mrs. Mildmay's who charged me, to ſay, that all laws human and divine, oppoſe your union.

Y. Melm. Very pathetic indeed, my lord! Ha, ha, ha!

Furn. [*Aſide.*] Second his motion.—[*to young Melmoth.*] Yes, Sir, and as the lady is a minor, the laws of England too——

Y. Melm. Oh, Sir, we ſhall not venture to break the laws of England, 'till we get into Scotland: ſo that you may ſpare your rhetorick.

Court. On my honour, Madam, you cannot be the wife of Mr. Melmoth.

Narc. But I ſuppoſe I might be your's, my lord, if I aſpired to that dignity; and ſo in return for your extraordinary friendſhip I promiſe you, that when I find I cannot be Mr. Melmoth's, I will give my hand to your lordſhip.

Court. If I ſhould take you at your word, Madam.

Narc. I will certainly keep it, and ſo now, I hope, you are ſatisfied. [*Going.*

Court. But Narciſſa!

Narc. Your humble ſervant, my lord.

Court. Mr. Melmoth!

Y. Melm. My lord, your moſt obedient. — Come Narciſſa, we'll take this way——poor lord Courtly! Ha, ha, ha! [*Exit young Melmoth and Narciſſa.*

Court. Madneſs and folly! How raſh and reſolute! At all hazard they muſt be prevented. Mrs. Mildmay muſt unfold the ſecret.—Advance there—Barriſter, purſue and detain them till I return with the lady's mother. [*Exit.*

Furn. Follow me. [*Furnival and ſervants going to advance.*

Syllog. [*advancing.*] Hold, hold, Mr. Barriſter, not a ſtep farther, if you pleaſe——and you, gentlemen, keep back I charge you, as you ſet a ſtore by your reſpective pericraniums.—[*Brandiſhing his cudgel, the ſervants make a ſhew of reſiſting with their ſticks.*

Furn. What does the fellow mean?

Syllog. I'll ſhew you that, Mr. Lawyer. [*Throwing open his great coat, and ſhewing a blunderbuſs ſlung over his ſhoulders.*] Do you ſee this curious piece of caſuiſtry? it contains very weighty reaſons againſt you, I aſſure you.

Furn. A blunderbuſs loaded with ſlugs, I ſuppoſe! a powerful way of arguing indeed!

Syllog.

Syllog. This, Sir, is the ultima ratio dialectici, and and is the moſt effectual argumentum ad hominem in the whole ſyſtem of logic.

[*Preſents the piece to the ſervants, who ſtart back.*

Furn. Is the man mad, or drunk?

Serv. Be which he will, Sir, we had better retire, for fear of miſchief.

Syllog. Yes, Sir, you had better take good advice, and retire, for fear of miſchief.

Furn. Wou'd the wretch commit murder?

Syllog. Not downright murdrum, Mr. Barriſter, as you wou'd call it; but being a little inebriated, one's hand is liable to ſhake, and this damned trigger here has no catch. [*Plays with the lock of the piece, with the mouth turned towards* Furnival.] Beſides, Sir, I am placed here upon duty; and by all the rules of war and logic, if you proceed vi et armis, I muſt oppoſe you by the ſame mode of ratiocination; therefore give up the point, ye ſcoundrels, [*Turning round, and preſenting the piece at the ſervants*] or I will let fly ſuch a ſhower of majors and minors among you, that ſhall make you tremble for the conſequences.

[*The ſervants run off.*

Furn. What, all gone! then I think I may as well withdraw my plea too. His lordſhip will certainly be nonſuited. [*Sneaks off.*

Syllogiſm *ſolus.*

So! the enemy hath made his retreat, and the day's my own. Egad I think I have diſplayed my prowiſs pretty well here.———I hope by this time my general hath carried off the ſpoils of the field, and then I ſhall have nothing to do but make an end of my ſupper, and ſing Te deum for the victory——with a health to the King.—Tol de rol, tol de rol.—

[*Shoulders his blunderbuſs and ſtruts off, ſinging the tune of the Belleiſle march.*

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT V.

SCENE *the* Parade.

Enter general Melmoth *and colonel* Camply.

General Melmoth.

THAT was unlucky, colonel—and ſo the young folks were intercepted in their flight.

G. Camp. By the lady's mother, Sir; who, being early informed of their intention, was by the aid and advice of lord Courtly at the place of rendezvous before them. For my own part, apprehenſive that my aſſiſtance would be called for, I purpoſely kept out of the way.

G. Mel. And how takes my kinſman his rival's interpoſition in this affair? Have you ſeen him to day?

C. Cam. Juſt now; and horribly mortified at his diſappointment, I aſſure you. He juſt diſpatch'd a note to lord Courtly.

G. Mel. A challenge! ha! colonel!—a mettled ſpark! But we muſt have no fighting, if it can be decently prevented: the conſequences may be fatal.

C. Cam. I don't ſee how Mr. Melmoth can recede, general; he muſt call his lordſhip to account for his laſt night's miſbehaviour.

G. Mel. Well, but you may be his ſecond, colonel, and prolong the ceremonials 'till I have had ſome talk with the young lady's mother. I promiſed yeſterday to endeavour to conciliate matters with her relations, had ſhe gone off with my kinſman to Scotland;

land; I can do no leſs than try how far my influence may extend now. If Mrs. Mildmay's objections to young Melmoth be merely founded on his ſuppoſed want of fortune, they are readily obviated; and lord Courtly be as you ſay, a man of ſenſe and principle, he will give up the point; and no longer endeavour to divide two young people, whoſe hearts ſeem form'd for each other. O! here comes Mr. Alderman Lombard.

G. Mel. I had a meeting with him laſt night, to ſettle the buſineſs of my executorſhip; when I took an opportunity to mention your affair with his daughter, Sophia; as alſo your electioneering buſineſs; in which he does not meet with the encouragement he expected; ſo that you may not find him ſo refractory as you imagined.——I have taken ſome ſteps towards your reconciliation.

C. Cam. This is ſo kind and obliging in you, general——

G. Mel. Nay, no compliments, my dear colonel; while dead to family connexions myſelf, I live but for the ſervice of my friends.

Enter alderman Lombard.

Good-morrow, Mr. Alderman.—

Lomb. Good-morrow to you, general.—*(to Camply)* your humble ſervant, Sir.

G. Mel. Colonel Camply, Mr. Lombard, a gentleman extremely deſirous of a more intimate acquaintance with you.

Lomb. I know it, Sir.—Tho' a ſtranger to his perſon, I am none to his name, and pretenſions.—

G. Mel. To both which, Sir, I hope you will ſoon be reconciled.

Lomb. I don't know that, Sir.—You ſet up for a borough, it ſeems, that I want to get for myſelf.

C. Cam. I do, Sir, at the general requeſt of the conſtituents.

Lomb.

Lomb. And you put up for a daughter too, whom perhaps I have a mind to keep to myſelf.

G. Mel. What, if you can diſpoſe of her to advantage, and make her happy in a good huſband, Mr. Lombard! No, no. I dare ſay you are too good a father for that.

Lomb. Why, to be ſure, general, if I could promote her happineſs, and my influence in the borough at the ſame time —

G. Mel. Both which I dare ſay you will, in conciliating matters with my friend, the colonel. You own, Mr. Lombard, the force of the arguments I made uſe of laſt night.—I ſhall now, therefore, leave the diſcuſſion of the matter to yourſelves; having ſome buſineſs of conſequence to diſpatch elſewhere. Mr. Lombard, your moſt obedient.—— [*Exit.*

Lomb. General, your ſervant.—Well, young gentleman, what is it you have to propoſe?

C. Cam. Sir, if you pleaſe to ſtep to my lodging, we may there talk the matter over a little.

Lomb. Look'ye, Sir, if you love my daughter, you muſt give up the borough.

C. Cam. Sir, I have the higheſt regard for both, and doubt not I ſhall be able to ſatisfy you.

Lomb. I am not ſo ſoon ſatisfied, Sir.—

C. Cam. This way, Sir, if you pleaſe. —

Lom. My daughter or the borough, Sir, — take your choice — Sophy or Gluttonbury — mind, I ſtick to that. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE

SCENE II. *Mrs.* Mildmay's.

Enter Mrs. Mildmay *and* Sift.

Mrs. Mild. Well, Sift, and can you learn whether the ſtory Mr. Melmoth hath told Narciſſa be true.

Sift. O lord, Madam, it is exactly as I gueſs'd yeſterday. What Mr. Melmoth told Narciſſa, Mr. Syllogiſm told me; but I knew it was a fib the moment I heard it.

Mrs. Mild. But how are you aſſur'd of it to-day!

Sift. From colonel Camply's own mouth, madam; who call'd me into the parlour this morning, and began to catechiſe me like a ſchool-maſter. Mrs. Sift, ſays he, what makes you abroad ſo early? What, your ladies have ſent you out upon the enquiry, I ſuppoſe, I know they are curious and inquiſitive.—Indeed, Sir, ſays I, you know no lady in our houſe half ſo inquiſitive as myſelf. Well, ſays he, what's the news then, at home? Why, Sir, ſays I, we hear that Mr. Melmoth's father is dead, and has diſinherited him.——Diſinherited him! ſays he, an idle ſtory, Sift, an idle ſtory, there is nothing in it.—So I thought, an pleaſe your honour, ſaid I, for I underſtood Mr. Melmoth was ſon to the ſtrange gentleman who viſited you yeſterday. Ay, Sift, ſays he, while that gentleman lives, Mr. Melmoth's fortunes are in the hands of a father.——Oh, ma'am, I'm poſitively certain it is as I firſt ſuggeſted.—

Mrs. Mild. Then ſo far all is well; but did you learn nothing more?

Sift. Oh, yes, ma'am; you wanted to know if the gentleman was married or not: but that ſeems to be a doubt.

Mrs.

Mrs. Mild. A doubt! Did colonel Camply ſay it was a doubt!

Sift. No, madam, I did not think that a proper queſtion to put to the colonel. But Mrs. Tiptoe, his honour's houſe-keeper, with whom I had a little confab afterwards, over-heard the gentleman tell her maſter yeſterday that he was married.

Mrs. Mild. How then is it a doubt?—[*aſide.*] Oh no! my fears are true, and I muſt ſtill be wretched.

Sift. Why, it ſeems, madam, the gentleman has loſt his wife.

Mrs. Mild. Loſt her! How?

Sift. Nay, ma'am, I know nothing more than that he can't find her; ſo that at leaſt ſhe is loſt to him. He has not ſeen her, I find, theſe twelve years paſt; though, by his own account, he has been looking for her almoſt from one end of the world to the other.

Mrs. Mild. Good heaven's! my hopes revive.

Sift. The colonel, adviſes him, if he don't find her ſoon, to look out for another: but he is one of your conſtant ſwains it ſeems, and declares, that if his firſt love cannot be found, ſhe ſhall certainly be his laſt.—Whether the gentleman will keep his word or not, is another affair. But this is all I could learn of the matter, madam, as it ſtands at preſent.

Mrs. Mild. I am ſatisfied. [*aſide.*] Is he then true to one he thought unfaithful? and can he ſtill remember me with tenderneſs? Go, leave me, Sift; I ſee Narciſſa coming.— [*Exit Sift.*

Enter Narciſſa.

Well, Narciſſa, I hope, that, on reflection, you are convinc'd of the danger and impropriety of your behaviour. Think, my dear, into what frightful perils your indiſcretion had betray'd you. Believe me, child, ſuch unadviſ'd proceedings, differs little from wilful diſobedience.—

Narc. Indeed, madam, I ſhudder at the reflection, and am hardly recover'd from the terror into which your relation had thrown me.——But, with regard to Mr. Melmoth's affinity, how was it poſſible for me, to have any ſuſpicion of it?

Mrs. Mild. It certainly was not: but, in a matter of ſo much importance, you ſhould not have acted ſo precipitately.

Narc. Nor ſhould I, mama, had not you been ſo much on the reſerve, and ſpoken of Mr. Melmoth ſo diſreſpectfully yeſterday morning.—But, for the future, I am all obedience.—How would you have me behave to him now?—as you ſaid ſo little to him laſt night, he will undoubtedly make me a viſit this morning.—How am I to reſiſt his ſolicitations, without giving him my reaſons for it.

Mrs. Mild. Cannot you turn the converſation on another ſubject? I ſhall now very ſoon come to an explanation with your father.

Narc. My father! madam.

Mrs. Mild. Yes, Narciſſa, that long loſt father, whom you have heard me ſo often lament, is now in Bath. I ſaw him yeſterday by accident, and to-day intend to procure an interview; which ſhould have been over, before I had imparted this circumſtance, had not your laſt night's adventure anticipated the diſcovery of Mr. Melmoth's being your brother.

Narc. But, is it not ſtrange, madam, that he ſhould ſay nothing to me of his father's arrival? But, on the contrary, ſhould tell me he was dead, and had diſinherited him?

Mrs. Mild. I cannot divine his reaſons for ſuch behaviour. But, men in love, Narciſſa, are ſtrange creatures. He might do it, poſſibly, to make a trial of your regard for him.—I am well inform'd, the ſtory, of his being diſinherited by his father's will, is falſe, as that of his death.——

Nar. It muſt have been a ſcheme then to miſlead

me into that dangerous project of elopement, which might have prov'd ſo fatal.

Mrs. Mild. It might; and therefore it would not be amiſs, my dear, if you affect to reſent it as ſuch; nay, I would have you do it, were it only to give a preparatory check to his paſſion, before he knows that you're his ſiſter. It will be improper for me to ſee him yet, as well in regard to what has paſs'd as to the danger of betraying a mother's affection too ſoon. I muſt ſpeak firſt with your father.

Narc. In what a ſituation then, madam, do you leave your Narciſſa? Is it for me to act ſo hard a part? Can I affect to treat with diſregard, the man ſo late I lov'd? Alas! I find his image wanting here. The void it left, no brother can ſupply.—Oh! my poor heart!

Mrs. Mild. I ſhare, my dear Narciſſa, your diſtreſs; and would not taſk you with a mother's weakneſs. But, for this once, call up your reſolution: an explanation yet were premature.—But here he comes—I muſt retire. [*Exit.*

Narc. Then let my duty teach me to diſſemble.

Enter young Melmoth.

(*As he enters*) Narciſſa! and alone! I feared this happineſs had been denied me.——My dear, Narciſſa! I am glad to ſee you look ſo charmingly to-day.—I was afraid, the ill ſucceſs of our laſt night's adventure, might have had an effect upon your ſpirits.

Narc. Not at all, Sir, I never was in better ſpirits in my life. [*Flutter'd.*

Y. Mel. Indeed! I wiſh I could ſay ſo—but our unlucky diſappointment!

Narc. Unlucky!

Y. Mel. Cruelly ſo: we might, ere this, have been half-way on our journey; and, in a few hours more, at the end of it;—where we might have put it out of the power of accident to part us.

Narc.

Narc. For that very reaſon, Mr. Melmoth, may it not be as well we were prevented?—What! to be tied together for life! never to be parted! Might we not, in time, have been tir'd of one another; and, after that, have been moſt diſagreeable companions?—

Y. Mel. Glad we were prevented! tir'd of one another! diſagreeable companione! How different is this language, and this behaviour, Narciſſa, to that of yeſterday?

Narc. What if I ſhould have chang'd my mind ſince yeſterday.

Y. Mel. Chang'd your mind, Narciſſa!

Narc. Is it impoſſible, Sir?—Did you never hear of a woman's changing her mind?

Y. Mel. Yes, madam, I have heard of wonderful changes in women's minds: but you are not in earneſt, Narciſſa?

Narc. Indeed, Sir, I am at preſent in no diſpoſition for jeſting. [*Gravely.*

Y. Mel. And you are really glad we were prevented going to Scotland to be married? Surely you diſſemble with me?

Narc. Not in that, believe me, Sir.—I would not have gone off with you to Scotland, and been married to you, for the world.

Y. Mel. Nay, then there is a change indeed.—But, for heaven's ſake, why? What can have work'd this aſtoniſhing alteration? What have I done, or ſaid, or thought? How am I chang'd, that ſuch a change ſhould have happened in you? Some villain, envious of my happineſs, muſt have unjuſtly traduc'd, and blacken'd my reputation.

Narc. Why, ſomebody has ſaid ſomething about you, it muſt be confeſs'd. But it was ſo far from being to your diſadvantage, that, had I never had any knowledge of you before, it would have induc'd me to love and eſteem you as a brother.—But, with regard to your own behaviour to me, Mr. Melmoth, I

muſt own it has been very exceptionable. How could you tell me, Sir, that your father was dead?

Y. Mel. He is, Narciſſa;—

Nare. Fie, fie, Mr. Melmoth.—I am well aſſur'd your father is ſtill living; and, muſt freely declare, that were there not another man in the world, I would not give my hand to his ſon.—[*aſide.*]—Now, I hope, my mama will be ſatisfied. [*Exit.*

Y. Mel. Do I live? Am I awake?—[*looking after her with aſtoniſhment.*]—Was that Narciſſa? or am I Frederic Melmoth? What can be the meaning of all this?—If ſhe be loſt, I know at leaſt who to thank for it.—Lord Courtly ſhall pay dear for this officiouſneſs.—I muſt and will have this behaviour explained.

[*Exit.*

SCENE III. *Another apartment in the ſame houſe.*

Enter General Melmoth, *ſhewn in by a ſervant.*

Serv. Pleaſe to walk this way, Sir.—Mrs. Mildmay deſires to be at preſent excus'd; but my young miſtreſs will wait on you immediately. [*Exit ſervant.*

Enter Narciſſa.

G. Mel. Madam, your moſt obedient.

Nar. [*Aſide.*]—Another painful taſk! Is this my father? certainly it is—he ſtrikes me with an awe I never felt before.

G. Mel. I am ſorry, madam, I cannot have the pleaſure of ſeeing Mrs. Mildmay.

Nar. You have then buſineſs with my mama, Sir.

G. Mel. I have, madam; but, as you are principally concerned in it, I ſhall, with your leave, impart it to you.

Narc.

Narc. If it be of immediate conſequence, Sir—— otherwiſe I ſhould rather—

G. Mel. Nay, but young lady, it is of conſequence, and to you too: I am not to learn, with regard to your late generous behaviour to Mr. Melmoth.—I am a relation of his; and, apprehending your laſt night's diſappointment, might have ſome diſagreeable conſequences, which I am able to remove, I have taken the liberty of the preſent intruſion.

Narc. This openneſs of behaviour on your part, Sir, would be a reproach to any mean reſerve on mine. But I am only at liberty to ſay, that the diſappointment, as you call it, was a fortunate one.

G. Mel. Is it poſſible you can think ſo? Then muſt I have been miſinform'd.

Narc. You will excuſe me, Sir, but my mama hath fully convinc'd me, that my intended marriage with Mr. Melmoth, would have been highly improper.

G. Mel. Improper!

Narc. Dreadful!—

G. Mel. You aſtoniſh me, madam.—Dreadful! What new folly hath he committed then? to what baſeneſs deſcended, that ſhould make an alliance with him deſerving ſuch an epithet?

Narc. Don't miſtake me, Sir;—I have ſtill the higheſt eſteem for Mr. Melmoth; but may mama——

G. Mel. Objects to his want of fortune; I know it. But if I convince her ſhe is miſtaken.—

Narc. Yet even then, Sir, notwithſtanding the ſincere regard I ſtill entertain for Mr. Melmoth; and the great reſpect which, though a ſtranger, I feel for you, I could not be induc'd to liſten to the ſolicitations of either.—No, Sir, I never can marry any man who calls you father.—But I can explain myſelf no farther. My mama is, by this time, diſengag'd, and will herſelf attend you. [*Exit.*

G. Mel. What is all this? Reſpect for me!—not marry any man who calls me father!—I am not young

Melmoth's

Melmoth's father; and if I were, what then?—unleſs —— but here comes the mother; ſhe may ſpeak more plainly.

Enter Mrs. Mildmay. [*Who ſtands at a diſtance, and looks at him with tenderneſs.*]

I beg pardon, madam, but—[*bowing ceremoniouſly, and advancing, 'till looking full in her face, he ſtarts back.*] Sure—that face—I—

Mrs. Mild. Mr. Wildman!

G. Mel. Her voice too!—Gracious powers!—It is —'tis ſhe—it is—it is—my wife.

Mrs. Mild. Yes; I am your wife, your once beloved wife.

G. Mel. And ſtill belov'd!——Come to my arms, thou long loſt, injur'd woman.——[*they meet and embrace.*] Oh, my wife!

Mrs. Mild. And art thou ſtill my husband?—I thought thou hadſt forgotten me.

G. Mel. Forgotten thee! Oh, never, never.

Mrs. Mild. Haſt thou forgiven me too?—

G. Mel. Forgiven thee, love!—Why, thou didſt never wrong me.

Mrs. Mild. Indeed, I did not; even when you thought me guilty, I was innocent.

G. Mel. I know thou waſt; and, in knowing that, have I ſo long been wretched.—Yes, thou waſt innocent; but it was I, 'twas I, forgot the father and the huſband, and wrong'd both thee and thine.

Mrs. Mild. Yet, I was indiſcreet, and much to blame.

G. M. Idle recrimination! no; you never were to blame—and yet your name is Mildmay. [*Turning from her.*

Mrs. Mild. Nay, turn not from me—I perceive your doubts; but they are vain and groundleſs; my name's aſſum'd like thine.——For your embraces form'd,

form'd, and yours alone; theſe have been widow'd arms e'er ſince you left me.

G. Mel. My faithful wife! Come then again to mine, and dwell for ever there. [*Embracing.*

Mrs. Mild. Alas, my love, this meeting's like a viſion. You ſeem as one new riſen from the dead.—

G. Mel. 'Tis the re-union of departed ſouls, favour'd by heav'n to meet again above, with joy unutterable.—

Mrs. Mild. Oh! let us, then, thank kind heav'n for ſuch a meeting.—

G. Mel. I cannot thank it better than I do. Heav'n knows the heart; and, from the fulneſs of my preſent joy, ſee's mine o'erflow with gratitude.

Enter Narciſſa.

Mrs. Mild. Narciſſa, come, and take a father's bleſſing.

G. Mel. Is this my daughter too!

Narc. Oh! my father. [*Kneeling.*

G. Mel. I will, but need not, bleſs thee. Heaven hath been ſo much kinder to thee than thy father. [*Raiſes her up, and embraces her.*

Enter young Melmoth.

Mrs. Mild. Welcome, my Frederic, to a mother's arms.

Y. Mel. Do you, then, give your daughter to my wiſhes? Thus let me thank you for the precious gift. —[*Kneeling, and kiſſing Mrs. Mildmay's hand; then riſing and turning to Narciſſa.*] —— But will Narciſſa ratify the grant?

Narc. Indeed, brother—I know not what to ſay.—

Y. Mel. Brother! Narciſſa!

G. Mel. Whence this miſtake?—[*to Mrs. Mildmay.*] We have alſo no ſon: our Frederic died, poor boy, long ſince, in India.

Mrs.

Mrs. Mild. Then have my hopes and fears alike been fruitleſs.

Narc. [*Aſide.*]—Again I feel my ſwelling heart replete.—

Y. Mel. How! what!

Narc. And you are not my brother then at laſt? [*To Young Melmoth.*

Y. Mel. Your brother, Narciſſa! No; dear as I might love a ſiſter, I would not be your brother for the world. I ſee through the whole of your ſtrange behaviour now.

G. Mel. [*To Mrs. Mildmay.*]—This young gentleman, my dear, is ſon to a diſtant relation lately dead: to whoſe fortune he is heir, and to whoſe laſt will I am executor.

Narc. Hoity toity! here's a tangl'd ſkain unravell'd.

Y. Mel. [*Aſide.*] — And general Melmoth is Narciſſa's father.

Enter lord Courtly, *introduc'd by a ſervant.*

Serv. Lord Courtly, madam. [*Exit Serv.*

Court. Ladies and gentlemen your ſervant. Happily aſſembl'd, I hope.—[*turning to Young Melmoth.*]—I preſume, Mr. Melmoth is, by this time, convinc'd of the impropriety of the angry billet he ſent me this morning.

Y. Mel. The miſtake we both lay under, my lord, at once juſtifies your behaviour and my reſentment.

Court. Fortunately for me, however, that miſtake drew a promiſe from the amiable Narciſſa; which, I flatter myſelf, ſhe is too generous to forget.

Narc. It is true, my lord, I did promiſe to give you my hand, if Mr. Melmoth could not accept it: and, if you had come a few minutes ago, I ſhould have been terribly puzzl'd what to do with you. But I can now keep my word, without your reaping any advantage from my promiſe.—

Court.

Court. Madam! Mrs. Mildmay, what have I to hope?

Mrs. Mild. Indeed, my lord, my preſent perplexity of joy and ſurprize, makes me as incapable of expreſſing my obligations, as the event puts it out of my power to requite them. Narciſſa is not Mr. Melmoth's ſiſter; but, inſtead of a brother, ſhe hath found a father, and I a huſband; to whoſe guidance and protection we now are ſubject.

G. Mel. With your leave then, madam, Mr. Melmoth ſha'l be yet your ſon.

Y. Mel. Then have I found, inſtead of loſt a father. [*Bowing to general Melmoth.*

Mrs. Mild. As to the preference I once gave your lordſhip—

Court. It lays me under an obligation, madam, that, in the preſent circumſtances, makes all apology needleſs.

Narc. Generouſly ſaid; is not it, Mr. Melmoth? —Indeed, my lord, I wiſh you a better wife than I ſhould have made you.

Court. And I you, madam, all happineſs, with a huſband that deſerves you.

Y. Mel. I ſhall endeavour to merit the compliment, my lord.

Enter alderman Lombard, *colonel* Camply *and* Sophia.

Lomb. Your ſervant, gentlemen and ladies. You ſeem to be mighty well pleas'd here: my daughter Sophy and the colonel have let me a little into ſomething.—

G. Mel. Oh, Camply! oh, my friend, behold my injur'd, much wrong'd wife and daughter!

Camp. Is it poſſible!

Lomb. How, how! the widow Mildmay, general Melmoth's wife!